

Zacchaeus's Conversion,
I N
Several Sermons.

S H E W I N G,

- I. Grace receives the vilest Sinners.
- II. The Lord Christ's Care over his, whilst uncalled.
- III. The different Methods God takes in converting Souls.
- IV. The Nature of Conversion.
- V. The Great Grace of Christ seen herein.

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L O N D O N :

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THE

PREFACE.

TH E Holy Scriptures do abundantly discover the Woful Condition of Man in his lapsed, fallen, State ; so long as he continues in that his Apostacy from God, he can have no well-grounded Hopes of Salvation in another World. Eph. 2. Without God, and without Hope in the World. Such are said in this World, Jer. 32. 33 To turn on God the Back, and not the Face. This being the present Posture of Man in his State of Nature, 'tis indispensably Necessary that there be a Return to that God. How,

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and in what Way and Manner, this is to be done, those Discourses that are Written on Conversion (and this among the rest) do design to shew.

But when a Man is truly convinc'd of Sin, and sees himself under the Curse and Sentence of the Law, 'tis no easie thing for him to persuade himself, or for others to persuade him, that there is Hope in Israel concerning his Soul. They only do account it an easie thing to Believe on Christ, who never were acquainted with themselves: Hence it is, that the Sacred Records of the Old and New Testament furnish us with Instances of great Sinners brought Home to God, and accepted of him; among which Instances this before us is one of the most Notable, in which the Holy Ghost does evidently drive at this Design, to make it more easie

The Preface.

easie to rising Generations to believe. Paul tells us, for this very Reason, the All-wise God suffer'd the Corruption of his Nature to run out so far, and then to bring him Home, 1 Tim.

1. 16. That in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all Long-suffering, for a Patern to them which shou'd hereafter believe on him to everlasting Life. Remarkable is that Passage of one of the Apostolick Fathers. Οὗτως οἵδις ἀποσόλες μέλλοντας κερύσσειν τὸ ἐυαγγέλιον ἀυτῷ ἔξελέξατο, ὅντας ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἀμαρτίαν ἀνομιώτερος, ἵνα δεῖξη, ὅτι οὐκ ἕλθε καλέσαι οἰκάριος, ἀλλὰ ἀμαρτωλὸς εἰς μετάνοιαν *. Neither was this the Sense of the Church of God in those Days only, but with an alike agreeableness to our Purpose, the same Doctrine continued to be preach'd up for above a Thousand Years after the former Testimony.

* Barnabæ Epist. Cath. P. 22. Oxoniz, 1685.

The Preface.

Αὐτὰ τὰ ιχυρότατα τῶν ἐθίσμάλων σκευῶν
ἀρπάζει ὁ κυρίος, καὶ τὰς πόλεις αὐτές καθαιρεῖ,
ὅτα γὰρ ὅπως ὃν μόνον τελώνας μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ
ἐποιήσατο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρχιτελώνην τὸ Ζαγχαῖον
αἰχμαλωτίζει πρὸς σωτηρίαν, &c. * We have
many Hinderers in our Way to Hea-
ven, but few that care to go thi-
ther themselves, and fewer still that
are helping others thither. I have
penn'd ^{up} these Meditations that I
might contribute somewhat thereunto,
and might be Instrumental, with
John the Baptist, to turn the
Hearts of poor perishing Sinners
unto the Lord their God,
Luke i. 15, 16. He shall be great
in the Sight of the Lord.
Then it follows, He shall turn
the Hearts of many of the
Children of Israel unto the
Lord their God ! Lo ! True
Greatness ! What is it ! This is the
only Greatness that Ministers of Christ

* Theophylact. in Loc. P. 485.

should

The Preface.

Should Pretend to, and be Ambitious of. O ! How much sweeter is this, than to be engag'd in Religious Debates and Contentions ? And when all is said upon a Controversie, the Question may be asked, Cui Bono ? What Good do they ? For Men will generally hold their own still : There will ever be a deal of unmortified Pride and Passion in the Hearts of Men, that when confuted, they are not convinced, and think it dishonourable to yield themselves mistaken. But the Matters here before us are of a more pleasant and delightful Nature, as well as greater and more mighty Concernment, to all those who account Salvation and Damnation of weight enough to deserve a Share in their most serious Thoughts.

And as it is of such Concernment in it self, so also that it be speedily

The Preface.

done. O ! How can Poor Lost Souls Rest, or be Quiet, how can they be Merry and Jocund, till they know how it will go with 'em to Eternity ? Before I take my Leave of 'em, I do Beseech them in the Bowels of Christ, to go aside, and sit down, and seriously Read what is in their Hand ; then adding Prayer to God, that if these Things be so, he would cause them to see them in his Light ; that they may understand the Things that belong to their Peace before they be bid from their Eyes.

23 OC 62

So Prays thy Soul's Servant,

for Jesus Sake,

Tho. Shepherd.

Dis-

DISCOURSE I.

LUK. XIX. 1, 2, 3, 4.

And Jesus entred, and passed through Jericho. And behold, there was a Man named Zaccheus, which was the Chief among the Publicans, and he was Rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was, and could not for the Press, because he was little of Stature. And he ran before, and climbed up in a Sycomore Tree, to see him; for he was to pass that Way.

WE have here an Account of the Conversion of a very great and scandalous Sinner. 'Tis observable, that the God of all Grace does generally chuse such; he seems

oft-times to single out the very worst from the whole Herd of Mankind, and to these he delights to display the Riches of his Glorious Grace.

I would first open the Words, in which we have,

1. The Place to which our Lord goes, on purpose that he might Convert this Sinner, to *Jericho*, called the City of *Palm-Trees*, because situated in the midst of a Plain full of Palm-Trees; a Plain Nine Leagues long, Five broad. The last Kings of *Judea* took great Pleasure and Delight in adorning and beautifying this City with Sumptuous and State-ly Buildings; here *Herod* the Great had a very fine Palace; 'twas a Neat Town, very Populous, and very Wicked.

Thither Jesus goes with a Design to Convert a Sinner; (O! What Care and Pains the Lord takes to fetch wandring Sinners Home?) And him the greatest Sinner in all the Town: Our Saviour says afterwards, that he came to seek and to save that which was lost, and so it appears by this Story.

2. The Convert himself describ'd,

1. By his Name. Christ was neither ashamed to call him by his Name then, in the Face of the Multitude that follow'd him ; nor to Name him now, in the Hearing of all the World, Rom. II. 29. *The Gifts and Callings of God are without Repentance.*

2. By his Profession or Trade of Life ; he was a PUBLICAN, a TAX-GATHERER for the Roman Emperor : They were accounted very Infamous. Our Lord joins an Heathen Man and a Publican together : And this Man was the chiefest of them ; the HEAD COLLECTOR, to whom all the rest brought in their Money.

3. By his outward Circumstances and Condition of Life ; he was Rich : The Jews, when in the Babylonish Captivity, had an University of their own, called *Pambeditha*, from whence they brought Home this Proverb with 'em, when they return'd into their own Land, viz. when they would express the Difficulty, or seeming Impossibility, of any Attempt, they would say, Surely thou hast of late been at *Pambeditha*, where Camels go through Needles : Now this Proverb our Lord applies to

to Rich Mens Salvation, *Mark 10.* 'Tis easier for a Camel to go thro' the Eye of a Needle, than for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God. With greater Eagerness they follow their Hounds than Heaven, making Idleness and Gaming the only Badges of Gentility. Varieties of Temptations Enchant the Rich on every Hand. All this is said to Illustrate the Freeness and Power of the Grace of God, discover'd in bursting asunder all those Ties, wherein Satan held him ; but this none admire but they that have felt it.

+. The Occasion of his Conversion, and that was his Curiosity to see Jesus. He could not but have heard of him oftentimes, but he was too intent upon the World to go far to see him, or hear him ; but now when he meets him in the Street, in his own Street, he had a sudden Impulse upon his Spirit, and was inflam'd with an eager Desire of seeing this Jesus, of whom the Country rang with the sound of his Fame and Miracles ; but the Crowd was so great, and he being a very little Man, fears a Disappointment ; whereupon laying aside all State, he runs

runs before, and climbs into a Tree that was fit for his Purpose; here was no Good in all this. *Herod* (as bad a Man as he was) was also mighty desirous of seeing Jesus.

Dox. Free Grace of God does frequently chuse and bring Home the very worst of Sinners.

I might have remark'd before, but I'll do it now, how that our Lord enters into *Jericho*, and passes through it; that is, was got almost through the Town before he met with this great Instance of Grace: The Lord Christ did doubtless pass by the Doors of many of the Jewish Dons. On this side the Way meets him a great Sinner, but the Man had such and such good Duties of his own, to which he trusts for Salvation; him Christ passes, for he knows that such an one will not give all the Glory of his Salvation to the Riches of Grace. On that side the Way he meets a Civil Person, well clad with a Moral Righteousness, Sober, Just, and Temperate, full of good Works; but alas, spoiled in that they neither flow from a right Principle, a new

new Nature, nor are directed to a right End, the Glory of God ; yet of this Man none can say black is his Eye. Jesus Christ passes him also ; he is not so proper and fit an Object of Grace ; for he will account, and so will the whole Neighbourhood, that he did more than half earn the Grace that was given him.

Christ meets another, but his Sins are not so great as his Neighbour's ; he does not need a Saviour : He was Born in the Bosom of the Church, and nourish'd up between the Breasts of Superstition : He is likewise passed by : He would love Christ but little, to whom little is forgiven.

At last he comes to the intended Sycamore, on which Christ's Thoughts were running ; and here, lo ! Here he spies *Zacchæus*, a fit Foil to set off the Riches, Power, Freeness, and Sovereignty, of the Redeemer's Grace. *ZACCHEUS* shall be called ; much shall be forgiven him, and he will love much ; and this, O ! How Delightful 'tis both to the Saviour and to the Sinner ? *Jericho* is one of the worst Towns in the whole Land, and *Zacchæus* one of the worst Men

Men in the whole Town ; yet this Man is called, and taken by Grace, and the rest are left.

1. I would first demonstrate the Point.
2. Apply it.

In the Demonstration of the Point I will take these Two Ways ; first of all, to produce such Arguments or Considerations as do evince it, and then farther carry on that Proof by Instances.

Consideration 1. There is, there can be, no Desert in Man ; * God Commendeth his Love towards us, that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us ; much more then being now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him. For if, when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son ; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life. Therefore some Observe, that the Lord Jesus chose to come into the World at that very Time, when all was out of Order, both in

* Rom. 5, 8, 9, 10.

Church and State : He would not come till *David's Family* was very low, as appears from *Joseph's Trade*, and from *Mary's Offering of Two Young Pidgeons*, that he might set us a Patern of Humility, and shew the greater Condescension and Love. So he chose not to come till the World had tried again and again, and could not save themselves, that they might think themselves the more oblig'd to him for coming to save ; and does not every Day's Experience still teach us, that Christ's Way is not to appear to a Soul till it first sees it self lost indeed ? Then ! Then a Saviour is joyfully receiv'd, and bid welcome. For this Cause, O Man, God is pleas'd to lay thee so low in thy Spirit. not to kill thee, but that he may lift thee up again with Advantage.

2. God takes a Man sometimes in the very midst of his Sin, as *Paul* in the midst of his Bitterness and Rage against God and his Church. *He * was breathing out Threatnings against the Church.* What Foreigner coming hi-

* *Acts 9. 1.*

ther would look for the Church of God in *England* anywhere else but in the Church of *England*? It could not enter into *Paul's* Thoughts that those few Dissenting Christians should be in the Right, and the degenerated Company that made up the Jewish Church should be in the Wrong. *Yet breathing out*, &c. He had been so for a good while already. *Breathing*. His very Breath was threatening, and fiery. Superstition and Persecution are Brethren. *Breathing out*. Such was his Bitterness he could not conceal it; here was nothing Preparatory; nothing to make Way for Christ to his Soul: Nothing in *Paul* any way inviting: There was nothing in him that could look like a Motive, unless Filthiness and Deformity are accounted such, *Eze. 16.* at large; the latter end of the Chapter concerns *Israel*, or the Church of God, when in *Egypt*, and so fitly represents, and sets out, our State before Conversion; nor was there any thing foreseen in them for which God should do for them what he does*

• Ephes. 1. 5.

according to the good Pleasure of his Will.
 He that sees whole Eternity before him,
 foresees that we cannot make him a
 Requital, * has therefore taught us to
 say, When we have done all, we are
 unprofitable Servants.

3. God requires no Condition to make
 this Grace ours, only a sight of our ab-
 solute Need. † *Ho, every one that Thirst-
 eth, come ye to the Waters, and he
 that hath no Money, come ye, Buy, and
 Eat; yea, come, Buy Wine and Milk
 without Money, and without Price;* and
 to receive it at his Hands; * *To as ma-
 ny as receiv'd him, to them gave he Pow-
 er to become the Sons of God, to them
 that believed on his Name.* And then to
 let it have free Scope in our Hearts
 and Lives, that is, to let it work in
 a suitableness to its own Nature, it
 will, like Leaven, assimilate and turn
 every thing into its own Nature and
 Likeness.

4. The great God cannot possibly
 be under any Obligation to his Crea-
 tures, *Psal. 100.* *He hath made us, and
 not we our selves; we are his People,* and

* Luke 17. † Isaiah 55. 1. * John 3. 12.

the Sheep of his Pasture. He gives us our Being ; and whatsoever we were, are, or can be, by Virtue of it, 'tis his Gift ; since we owe our selves, we must needs owe all that is any way ours to him. So that we may well conclude with the Apostle, * *By Grace we are saved ; and that not of our selves, it is the Gift of God.*

2. *Branch.* But poor guilty Man can hardly believe this : I'll go on therefore in the Proof of it ; let us search into the Records of the Word, and see what Instances of Grace we can find there ; what sort of Persons Grace delights to Converse with : Whereby it will be still more evident, that God does frequently, if not generally, call the worst of Sinners.

1. He always has done so formerly in the Times of the Old Testament. *Abraham*, a Man drench'd in Idolatry. *Rahab*, a known Prostitute. *Manasseh*, an Infamous Wizard, who had not only forsaken God, but had join'd himself by Covenant to his grand, pro-

* Ephes. 2. 8.

fess'd, declar'd, Enemies, the fallen Angels ; and when he came into the World, what were his Progenitors ? Why, they (as it is often observed, and cannot be too often) were not only sinful Persons, but infamous, *Matth. I.*

2. He does so still, and 'tis very likely always will do so. When upon Earth, Publicans and Harlots made up a great part of Christ's Train. See what Courtiers the King of Heaven has about him. * *And it came to pass afterward, that he went through every City and Village preaching, and shewing the glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God : And the Twelve were with him ; and certain Women which had been healed of Evil Spirits, and InfirmitieS, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went Seven Devils. He was Gracious in the Days of his Flesh to that Dog,' the Woman of Canaan, to that Wanton, Filthy, Samaritan, *John. 4.* to that Devil, M A G-D A L E N E, a Woman full of Devils ; who was sunk so low into impure Pleasures, that as a Reward of her Uncleanliness, Seven Unclean Devils were per-*

* *Luke 8. 1, 2, 3.*

mitted to enter into her ; yet through that Throng of Devils Grace found a Way to her Heart. *Matthew*, the Publican, the Thief upon the Cross, the raging blaspheming Persecutor, † are taken, whilst others are left in all this Throng in the Streets of *Jericho* ; not a Man laid hold on by Grace but *Zaccheus*.

§ 1. *Exhortation.* O Man ! Turn and Live. Christ is willing to save, but foolish Man regards him not.

1. Sin is a slavish Thing ; he that is condemned to the Gallies, or the worst Drudgery on Earth, is not so great a Slave, as he that is in Bondage to, and is ever *serving, divers Lusts and Pleasures* ; a Soul that is escaped out of the Snare of Satan, would not again be under the Command of every Imperious and Base Lust for the greatest Kingdom on Earth.

Thou canst not enjoy thy self whilst in this Condition : If thou art at all enlightened, thy Breast is continually full

† 1 Tim. 1. 13, 14, 15, 16.

of Tossings and Disquietudes. * *The Wicked are like the Troubled Sea that cannot rest.* Reader, if thou art still unconverted, thou art in perpetual Danger; the least Accident may strip thee of thy outward Delights, nay, of Life it self, and may throw thee into thy Grave; and there is no great distance between an ungodly Man's Grave, and his Hell.

2. Thou lovest a most glorious Heaven, and wilt drop into a most dreadful Hell, if thou livest and diest in a Graceless State. Thou hast lost the Happiness of the Saint, and canst never recover it; art plung'd into the Sinner's Misery, and canst never more escape from it. Thou wilt not be able to look God in the Face in the Great Day. *Psal. 1. last, The Ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment, nor Sinners in the Congregation of the Righteous.* When all Gospel Sinners in their Christless State shall stand naked and trembling before the Bar of a Just and Holy God, O! What a dreadful, unspeakably dreadful, unconceivably dreadful, Day will that be to all those who now slight the kind Offers

* Isa. 48. last.

of a loving Saviour? Sinner, Read and Pause upon the Text, Rev. 6.15, 16, 17. full of Thunderbolts. *The Kings of the Earth, and the Great Men, and the Rich Men, and the Chief Captains, and the Mighty Men, and every Bond-Man, and every Free-Man, hid themselves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and said to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb, for the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?*

§ 2. Encouragement to convert and turn to God.

1. Turn to him, for he calls thee, Prov. 8. *Doth not Wisdom cry, and Understanding put forth her Voice? She standeth in the top of high Places, by the Way in the Places of the Paths: She crieth at the Gates, at the entry of the City, at the coming in at the Doors. Unto you, O Men, I call, and my Voice is to the Sons of Man. Hear, &c.* Again, he invites thee, Matth. 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that Labour, and are heavy Laden, and I will give you Rest:* Nay, more,

he

he promises not to cast thee out, John 6.
37. *Him that cometh to me, I will in
no wise cast out.*

2. Because thy Sins are great, therefore come. Thus the Spirit of God teaches us to argue with God, *Pardon mine Iniquity, for it is great* *. So again, Mic. 7. 18, 19. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgression of the Remnant of thy Heritage* ? He retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy : He will turn again, he will have Compassion upon us : He will subdue our Iniquities ; and thou wilt cast all our Sins into the depths of the Sea. Again, they are many, therefore thou hast need to come. *Innumerable Evils have compass'd me about ; they are more in Number than the Hairs of my Head* †. Though they have been oft repeated, yet the Gracious Lord will forgive, Jer. 3. 1. *Thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord* ; nay, although they have been extreamly aggravated. Jer. 3. 7. *And I said, after she had done all these Things, turn thou unto me.*

* Psal. 25. 11. † Psal. 40.

3. Come to Jesus Christ, for He hath receiv'd as great Sinners as thy Self. This Consideration has brought in many Sinners to the Saviour's Arms: This did encourage Souls formerly, when Christ was on Earth, *Luke 5. 27.* when Matthew the Publican, upon his Conversion, invited Christ to a Feast, 'tis said that *many Publicans came and sat down with Him.* O Most sweet and endearing Sight, Jesus Christ among an Herd of Publicans, that none might hereafter be so dazled with the Glory of his Majesty, as to dread his Presence, and so keep at a distance from a mild and compassionate Saviour!

4. Come! You can't be too bad for this Heavenly Physician to Heal you: He chuses and delights to single out such Patients whose great Sins would be the greater foyl to set off the Lustre and Glory of his own Grace. Great Sinners, when brought Home, are Christ's Glory and Triumph: As the Physician boasts of his mighty Cures, *Luke 8. 1, 2, 3.* *He went throughout every City and Village preaching, and the Twelve were with Him.* And certain Women which had been healed of evil Spirits and Infirmities, Mary called

Magdalen, out of whom went seven Devils, &c. Christ, in a way of Shew and Triumph carried these Sinners about the Country with Him: He was not ashamed of them, and I am sure they had no reason to be ashamed of Him. When other poor sinful Souls saw these in Christ's Company, it did mightily encourage and help them in believing.

' Behold, O my Soul, *Magdalen* sitting there, in yonder Corner of the Room.
 ' I have been apt to say within my self,
 ' there is no Hope for such an One as
 ' I; my Corruptions were strong and potent, tho' often baffled; they rise upon me again with a renewed vigour. Tho' Ordinances, tho' Providences, have been hitherto unsuccessful, and too weak to deal with 'em, yet, O my Soul, give not up thy Hopes; Grace, I see, can do mighty Things, it has cast out of *Magdalen* Seven Devils, and who knows how many Sins it over-look'd and pardon'd at the same time.
 ' Well then, I will not be faithless, but believing.

5. You shall, upon Trial, be able to find Rest no where else. *Psal. 43. Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul, &c.* Then we re-

turn

turn to our Rest, when we return again to our God. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give it you.*

B 2 DIS-

DISCOURSE II.

LUK. XIX. 5.

*And when Jesus came to the place,
he looked up, and saw him, and
said unto him, Zaccheus, make
haste and come down, for to day
must abide at thy house.*

HA VING already consider'd the Place, the Person of this great Convert, as also the Occasion of his Conversion, we are now come to a Fourth Thing equally worth Consideration namely, his Conversion it self, with the secrecy and suddenness of it.

Let me first expound the Words, where-

i. Jesus looked up and saw him. This was not the first time that Christ saw Zaccheus. He saw him run before to seek out a Place to stand in ; nay, more than God he sent him up into the Tree

by inclining him thereto, as Man he call'd him down.

2. He calls him by Name, ZACCHEUS, make haste and come down.

Quest. How did Jesus know him, having never seen him before?

Answ. Oh! He had oft seen his Name in the Book of Life. He tells Moses he knows him by NAME. *John 10.* He knows all his Sheep by Name. The Book of Life is called the Fathers, as the Souls (therein said to be written down) are chosen by him. The Father gives out the Grant and Order that such a Soul be saved. Again, 'tis said to be the Lamb's Book of Life, to intimate his Concernment in, and his Care of, the Souls therein mention'd. He is to Save them every One, and to see that not One of 'em miscarry. We write down what we wou'd be sure to remember; so they are said to be written down, nay, to be engraven on the Breast-plate of *Aaron*, on the Heart of our High-Priest Jesus Christ.

3. He invites himself to his House. He knew that *Zacchæus* had such a Sense of

his own Unworthiness, that he durst not invite him. He saw that a superstitious Jew wou'd not come under his Roof, and could he think that the Lord and Saviour of the Jews would regard a Gentile? Would be Guest to one of the worst among all the Gentiles? But Christ saw he should be Welcome; he had already sent forth a Beam of Grace into the Heart of *Zacchæus*, and prepar'd his own Way.

Again, Thus by this great act of Condescension, in inviting himself to *Zacchæus* his House, he strengthens Faith in his Heart, raises and excites his Courage, that he might dare to believe: This it is that damps our Faith, we think him so great, that it would surely be Presumption in us to expect he should regard us; but when we know and are perswaded that he is as Good as Great, this mightily helps and strengthens our Faith in him.

4. Necessity of *Zacchæus* his Conversion, this very Day, and by this very Way. This was spoken with respect to the Decree of God, in Obedience to which our Lord was always found. So *John* 4.
4. *He must needs go thro' Samaria.* So

John

John 10. Other Sheep I have which are not of this Fold, them also I must bring, &c.

From the Words thus divided and explain'd,

Observe 1. It is good to be within the Walk of Jesus Christ, and to come where he is, tho' it be not from a right Principle, and with regular Aims and Ends: Tho' it be only Curiosity that brings us thither, you know not what he may do for you. But Oh! How kindly does he take it, when from a Principle of Love to him we come with the Disciple's Question in the first of *John*, *Lord, where dwellest thou?* Or with those Greeks, *John 12. We would fain see Jesus?* We are desirous of farther Acquaintance and Communion with God? The Lord Christ (as appears from what follows these Verses, 23, 24.) was well pleased with it, and look'd upon himself as highly glorified.

This Consideration may relieve Souls under the Tyranny of Doubts and Fears. For he kindly accepts of the least good Breathing after him. *He regards the Desire of the Humble.*

2. How easie it is with the Lord to turn a Sinner, and change his Heart.

Who shall Despair of the Conversion of an ungodly Relation, seeing he is in the Hand of that God who can look Grace into the Heart? Sometimes a single Word does it, *Mat. 4. 19, 20, 21, 22.* Sometimes a cast of his Eye, as here; and in the Case of *Peter*, when under his Fall, Christ turned and looked upon *Peter*; that Look melts the Heart of an harden'd Disciple: That Look recovers him, and sets him upon his Feet again: With that Look there went Power, such a Power as that which first made and form'd the Heart. And our Lord bids his Hearers Comfort themselves with this, in or under seeming Impossibilities, *Mark 10.* *That with God all Things are possible;* for Omnipotent Grace cannot be defeated, since it can by a Look fetch in a Wandring Soul.

3. Grace always prevents, and begins with us; it goes forth to meet the Sinner, and prepares the Heart; it makes its own Way, and does its own Work. We might as well have prevented him, and gone before him in the Old Creation-work, as in the New. What is it that must prepare the Heart for Grace? Sin will not, Satan will not cast out Satan, unless in Policy,

Policy, that he might thereby get the greater hold on the Man. Nature can not, if there be something in the Heart that opens to Grace, and bids it Welcome. Why! That is Grace that is there already: What Preparation of Heart was there in *Matthew* the Publican? For he was so busie in his Toll-booth that he scarce looks up to Jesus passing by, who saw him, and converted him at the same time. How clear is the Instance of *Paul*? For he was in the midst of his Rage when God met him. Go then, Soul, and plead that Promise, *Ezek. 36. 26, 27, 28.* *A new Heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them, &c.* All Spiritual Operations upon the Soul are purely of God's Gift. Away then with all lofty Conceits of thy own Strength and Ability, and dwell more in Prayer.

4. The Kingdom of Providence acts in a very powerful and sweet Subserviency to the Kingdom of Grace. Jesus

Christ as God mov'd the Heart of *Zacchæus* to run before, and climb this Tree, Christ as Man look'd up to him, and call'd him down. As a God of Grace he designs to call such a Sinner home, as God of Nature he does by his Providence so and so dispose of Things, that the Person shall be taken, his Heart shall be won back again to his Maker.

From the Words thus expounded, take this.

Doct. The Lord Christ has great Care over his Elect whilst uncalled, and an Holy Necessity lyes upon him to see to bring 'em Home.

1. How appears this Care of his towards them?

2. Shew what kind of Necessity this is.

3. Apply it.

1. How appears this Care of Jesus Christ towards his Elect not yet called?

1. He takes Notice where they Live, and will find 'em out when the Time of their

their Call is come, * *I have much People in this City.* He will find them out tho' in the darkest and most remote Corners of the Earth. Nay, such is his Care, that they are said to be ever in his Eye. *Thy Walls are continually before me.*

2. He will send the Means of Grace to them without their Desire, *Acts 16. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.* *They assayed to go into Bythinia, but the Spirit suffer'd 'em not, and they passing by Mysia, came down to Troas.* And a Vision appear'd to Paul in the Night. There stood a Man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, *Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*

3. He will fit a Minister's Lips to a Peoples Ear. The lowest Gifts are as necessary in their Place, and as profitable to some Souls, as the highest Gifts are to others. *Acts 14. 1.* *They so spake, that a great multitude, both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed.*

4. He will make the Means effectual to their Conversion. *John 10. 16.* *Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice;* see this fulfilled, *Acts 11. 21.* as indeed every Conversion is in part of a

* *Acts 18. 10.*

fulfilment of it daily. *And the Hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.*

O how shou'd converted Souls admire the Condescension and Grace of God in all this? It shou'd encourage us also to pray for the Souls of our Friends and Relations. They that regard not the Salvation of the Souls of others, are very unlike to Jesus Christ. You can do little, you say, towards the Conversion of others; however, Pray and Hope still: The Lord Christ has taken upon him the Care of all the Elect.

2. What kind of Necessity this is.

Answ. 'Tis not an Absolute, but Hypothetical, Necessity. That is, on Supposition God will save Man in this his determin'd Way, then 'tis necessary that Jesus Christ should call, and thus perswade, them.

But more particularly,

1. It supposes Man lost. So every Natural Man is represented, *Luke 15.* thro' the whole. Tho' he lives under the Ordinances, yet he is a lost Man, till called by

by Grace. *Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.* And that his coming was upon this Design, to call Home lost and straying Sinners. *Luke 19. 10. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

2. It supposes Man's inability to return, partly from the darkness and blindness of his Mind. *Rom. 3. 17. The Way of Peace have they not known.* 2 Cor. 4. 3. *But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, shou'd shine unto them.* Partly from the Obstinacy of his Will. *We will not have this Man to reign over us.* Tit. 3. Sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures.

3. It supposes God's fixt Decree to call Souls. The number of Souls to be called falls under the Decree. *Acts 2. last. The Lord added to the Church daily such as shou'd be saved.* Again, the very Persons and Means of their Call. *Acts 10. 5, 6. And now send Men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a Tanner, whose House is*

is by the Sea-side : He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. As also the Time, Jer. 2. 24. In her Month they shall find her. Hosea 6. 11. Also, O Judah, he hath set an Harvest for thee, when I returned the Captivity of my People. Yea, the very Words whereby they shall be wrought upon. Acts 2. 37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their Heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, what shall we do ?

4. It supposes the everlasting Compact between the Father and Son, Isa. 49. at large in the beginning of that Chapter. Hence the Counsel of Peace is said, Zech. 6. 13. to be between them both. And Jesus Christ is said to be about his Father's Business, whilst he is offering Salvation to poor Sinners. It is his Father's Business, as well as his own, and both of 'em are equally pleas'd with a Penitent return to God.

5. It supposes his Faithfulness in his Mediatory Work, even to the pouring out his Soul unto Death. Hence there is a *must* put upon every part of his Office, and of Man's Salvation. Before he comes his Way *must* be made ready by Elias ; when he is come he *must* Work. John 9. 4. The Work

Work of him that sent me whilst it is day.
 Again, Luke 4. 43. I must preach the Kingdom of God to other Cities also. Again, I have other Sheep which are not of this Fold, them also I must call. If he speak of his Sufferings. *The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the Elders, &c.*

§. I. To lost Souls. Then sure you should come and obey the Mediator's Call, else you slight, and spill the Blood of Christ upon the Ground; you disappoint the Expectations of God the Father, who is brought in thus speaking, surely, *They will Reverence my Son;* else you sin against the Spirit of God, who stands ready to apply the Redemption of Christ to thy Soul. Tit. 3. 5. *Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but of his Mercy he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

Quest. How shall I come?

Answ. Sit down and consider thy Case. Labour to get a thorough Sense, an affecting Sense, of thy lost State. And then, that there is Salvation in none other but Christ. *That there is none other Name given among Men whereby they*

can

can be saved. In the next place, thy Work is to believe on him ; the first and justifying Act of Faith is that of Reliance. Receive him as thy Saviour, and rest wholly on him for Eternal Life. John 1. 12. *As many as receiv'd him, to them he gave Power to become the Sons of God, to as many as believed on his Name.* He will furnish Thee with such a Righteousness as will give Thee a safe and full Title to Heaven. Then see (after that) to the sanctifying act of Faith, that of Resignation. True Faith persuades and enables the Soul wherein it dwells to resign it self up to Christ. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?*

§. 2. Consolation to the Children of God.

There lies the same Necessity upon the Lord Christ to carry on the whole Work of Grace in thy Soul. 2 Thes. 3. 3. His Faithfulness lies at stake. *But the Lord is Faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from Evil.* Let such then bless God for this Necessity laid upon the Mediator, else you had never been converted ; for thy Mind was Enmity against God. Nor couldst thou hold out after Conversion, if he did not continually stir and

blow

blow up thy Grace, and keep in the flame. *We shou'd be rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith, Col. 2. 7.* Abounding therein with Thanksgiving, for herein is administred a strong ground for Faith, and the highest Reason for thy chearful Praises. O bless our God, ye People, and make the Voice of his praise to be heard, who holdeth our Soul in Life, and suffereth not our Feet to be moved.

DIS-

DISCOURSE III.

L U K. XIX. 6.

*And he made haste and came down,
and receiv'd him joyfully.*

TH E Concomitants of Zacheus's Conversion come next to be consider'd. There was a flame of Divine Love suddenly kindled in his Breast by the Breath of the Redeemer, calling him down.

The Exposition.

1. He made haste. This unexpected Favour and Familiarity of the Saviour inspires the Sinner's Heart with Gratitude and Love: Love is in haste to discover it self. Gen. 34. 19. So in the Conversion of Matthew the Publican, Mat. 9. 9. *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a Man named Matthew, sitting at the Receipt of Custom; and he saith unto him, Follow me.*

me. And he arose and follow'd him. Andrew and Peter, Mat. 4. 20. They strait-way left their Nets, and follow'd him. Had not Zaccheus made haste down, he had been very unworthy of so Excellent and Divine a Guest.

2. The Joy that attended his Conversion. These were his secret Wishes, that he might have his full sight of Christ, but dares not think of inviting him to his House: O that we cou'd try, and we shou'd always find that Jesus Christ is better to Souls than they can ask, or think, or expect. If he so rejoiced because Christ was with him, tho' to stay so short a time in his House; O how happy they that shall live for ever with him, without parting any more? *That shall be Pillars in the House of God, and go no more out?*

Obs. 1. Christ always brings Matter of Joy along with him when he comes with Salvation to any Soul. I do not say he brings actual Joy, but there is Ground for, or matter of Joy: *Son, be of good comfort, thy Sins are forgiven thee.* I gather from thence, that Forgiveness of Sin is the only solid Ground of Joy. Philip Preaches the Gospel in Samaria. Acts 8. 8. *And there was great Joy in that City.*

Quest. But then why are unpardon'd Sinners generally the most Jocund and Merry?

Answ. Partly because they understand not their Condition. 'Tis part of the Description of Men in their unconverted State, that *they have no understanding, they do not understand nor seek after God.* They do not understand their Loss so far as to see a Necessity of seeking after God. Such an one may be very acute and discerning in Worldly Matters, and yet be wholly benighted, and in the dark, as to things Spiritual, that concern their everlasting State, partly, as they do not consider it. *Hosea 7. 2. They consider not in their Heart that I remember all their Wickedness, &c.* And so may, and most Men, do continue Strangers all their Days to their own Souls.

Quest. 2. Why are the Godly oft-times more Sad and Melancholy than other People? They seem not to have more, but rather less, Joy than others.

Ansf. Tho' they have ground of Joy, yet they cannot take it up of themselves. This is the Work of the Spirit of God. *2 Thes. 2. 16, 17. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father,* which

which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting Consolation, and good Hope, thro' Grace, comfort your Hearts. Note, here is ground of Comfort inlaid in the Soul, called everlasting Consolation; yet he prays that the Lord would Comfort them; that is, that the Spirit of God would take up these Grounds of Comfort, and shew them to Conscience, and so actually Comfort 'em.

2. 'Tis not because they are Godly that they are so sad, but because they are no more so. They have Grace enough to bring 'em off from Carnal, Worldly, Delights, but not enough to enable 'em to live upon the Spiritual and Invisible World, and the Pleasures thereof, and to fetch all their Comforts from thence. Grace has spoil'd their Joy in the Creatures, yet they are not grown so Spiritual as to live upon God; hence it is that they are so often hovering between Earth and Heaven.

Obser. 2. Souls at first Conversion have oft-times more affectionate Love to, and more sensible Joy in, Christ, than they have ever after: The Novelty of the Change does help to affect 'em; with the blind Man restor'd to Sight, they are in

a new World, and see every thing big with Wonder; tho' they are as solidly joyful all their Life after, yet they do so passionately express their Joy, as they did at first Conversion.

Again, Christ will have it so sometimes, thereby to put an Honour upon the Day of the Souls Espousals: *Song. 3.* last, *Go forth, O ye Daughters of Sion, and behold King Solomon with the Crown wherewith his Mother crowned him in the Day of Espousals, and in the Day of the Gladness of his Heart.* Christ rejoices over the Soul in that Day in which it enters into a Marriage Covenant with him; and what wonder if some Drops of this Joy fall into the Believer's Heart? The Joy that such oft-times have at their first Conversion, is but an Echo of the Joy of Christ concerning them.

As also, that he may shew the Soul, now return'd to him, that there are Joys in God altogether as good, nay, better, than the World's: *Abraham made a great Feast at the Joy of Isaac's weaning;* so does God for his Children sometimes, when they are wean'd and brought off from carnal Pleasures, and worldly Delights: Yet a Tide of Affection, abstractedly

edly consider'd in it self, is no sufficient Reason thence to conclude that the Heart is renewed: The stony Ground, Mat. 13. had a sudden Joy, as likewise those, John 6. that cry, *Lord, evermore give us this Bread.* Nor may we judge of our present Strength by them, if so, we shall be mistaken, as Peter was, *Tho' all Men forsake thee, yet will not I.* Good Man, he thought that Frame would ever abide upon his Spirit.

Quest. What then may we judge by, that we may know how far to trust to our own Strength?

Ans. 1. Thou may'st rather judge of thy Self by what thou art, or hast been, in a Temptation: That a Man is that he is when he is tried of the Lord: That Temptation in Paradise was to try the Strength of *Adam:* So God does still try the Strength of all his, sooner or later. God never gives Strength but he tries it.

Ans. 2. But you are not to trust to your own habitual Grace or Strength at all, be it what he will. Grace inherent is a Creature, and no Creature is to be leant upon. You may not trust to Grace within, but to Grace without, you, laid up in Christ for you. 2 Tim. 2. 1. Be strong

*Obs. 3. A Soul, upon the turning Point,
is in haste when 'tis once sensible of its
Danger. Psal. 119. 59, 60. I thought on
my Ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Testi-
monies. I made haste, and delayed not to
keep thy Commandments. It ought to give
in a speedy Answer to God's Call, with-
out Demurrs, or trifling Delays: When
Persons stand dallying with God, 'tis a
sign that the Spirit of God has made but
very shallow Impressions upon their
Souls: The sooner thou obeyest thy
Call, and the more the time thou spend-
est in the House of God, thou wilt be
the more rich in Grace and Spiritual Ex-
periences. Thou wilt have the less Guilt
to gall and vex thy Conscience. And
the better thou carriest it to God, the
kinder will he carry it to thy Soul. Psa.
18. 26. *With the Pure thou will shew thy
self Pure, and with the Froward thou will
shew thy self Froward.* There is scarce
such a Man found upon Earth that will
expressly say I will not hearken to Christ:
But by putting off this Work from time
to time they do effectually deny him,
deceive themselves, and lose their
Souls.*

Souls for ever. Jesus Christ invites Souls, is sending out his Servants with the kindest Messages, *Luke 14.* at large. What are they invited to? Is it to enter a Prison for his sake? Or to lay down their Lives for him? No, at present 'tis only to sit down and feast with him; it was a Marriage-feast too, the most joyful of all Feasts. *Mat. 22.* Well, What can we suppose but that they come running? No such matter, they all make Excuses. Why! Had they been consulting together? No, but Indwelling Sin speaks the same Language for the main in every Man's Heart. Tho' not Two of the Men had exactly the same Excuse, yet they all agreed in this, to make Excuses, and to put off and baulk the Invitation, they would not come.

Against Delays, consider,

1. The State you are in is exceeding Dangerous, unexpressibly Dangerous. You would wonder at him that should lye down on the top of a sharp Rock, in the midst of the raging Sea, when he might rest safely in his Bed. Why, thou art the Man. Thou art guilty of a more dangerous Fol-y. Thou art an undone, perishing, Sinner,

ner, under the pursuit of Divine Justice, yet thou are secure in this State. Reader, sit down, and pause upon it, is not this thy Case? Wast thou not Born in Sin? Art thou not by Nature a Child of Wrath? Art thou got out of this State or no? If not, consider again, thou art a mortal, dying, Worm. Why! Art thou not in haste? The Man-slayer under the *Levitical Law*, who was pursu'd by the Avenger of Blood, was in haste, till he was got into the City of Refuge, and so out of Danger. Thy Condition is not to be rested in one Day, one Hour, no, not one Moment, lest the Arrows of Divine Vengeance, which fly thick in the World, should alight upon thee, and cut thee off before thy Work be done, and Peace be settled between God and thy Soul.

2. Thou hast but a short time allowed thee here on Earth. Thou hast a Day, and but a Day: Your Day will soon have a Night; therefore be up, and about your Work, whilst it is yet bright Day. God stays awhile upon Souls, but he will not always stay. *I stand, says he, at the Door and knock.* Calls upon us, but in a moving, travelling, posture.

ture. If they make haste to receive him well; if not, yet know that now *is the Accepted time, now is the Day of Salvation.* Only the present Moment is that you can call your own. Our Lord Christ, tho' he knew how long he had to Live in the World, yet would not neglect or delay his Work, *John 9. 4. I must Work the Work of him that sent me while it is Day, the Night cometh when no Man can Work.* Is it for us then to dally and triflē, that know not but our Time may expire, and the Lamp of our Life be put out, while we are Hearing or Reading this. The Jew has had his Day; the Gentiles, many of them, have had their Day; but 'tis over with them: The Seven Churches of *Asia* had their Day; Nations have their Day: You see Cities have their Day: *When he beheld the City, and wept over it, hadst thou known,* (speaking of Jerusalem) even thou *in this thy Day.* Towns and Villages have their Day; as *Anathoth* had hers. *Ah poor Anathoth!* Nay, every Family, every Person, has his Day. O then hear to Day, whilst it is called to Day, lest any be hardened by the Deceitfulness of Sin. If it be hard to Day, it will be more so to Mor-

row: If difficult to turn to God this Year, it will be more so the next: And Satan's Interest will strengthen, and unaccountably grow, upon us. The Spirit of God in Displeasure will turn away. *Gen. 6. 3.* And if you find it so hard to turn to God now, whilst his Spirit stands inviting, and offering his Aid, Ah! What can you do when that Wind does not blow?

3. Thousands have come too late, when the Door has been shut: And thou art one of those that are in extream Danger. *Esau* comes howling when the Patriarchal Blessing was already disposed of. The foolish Virgins came when the Door was shut. *Rahab, Josh. 2.* ran next way, and bound the Scarlet Line in the Window. With what Pleasure does she daily behold it? Oh happy Pledge of mine and my Family's Deliverance! If, Soul, thou art in Earnest, why not now? Surely Delay damns more Souls than any thing in the World besides.

§. *Exhortation.* More particularly to the Youth.

Make haste then to give in your Answer to your Call; bring your Selves as a Free-will Offering to God: I wish that Persons

Persons would speak out their Prejudices against Godliness, that so they might be answer'd, and remov'd, and they the sooner converted. By smothering these in their Breasts, they are kept at the longer distance from God.

Obj. However, what Prejudices soever they have beside, I take it for granted this is one, and one of the Principal; namely, that he must leave all his Pleasures and Delights behind him, on that Day when he becomes the Lord's. I would fain answer this, because I believe it secretly holds back its Thousands, and Ten Thousands, from God.

Ans. 1. The Pleasure thou takest in Sin, is but a Disease upon Humane Nature. Was it not that there is a Distemper upon thy Nature, thou couldst find no Pleasure in Sin, ('tis like drinking abundantly in a Fever) get then thy Heart changed, thy Nature purified, and thou wilt find it more sweet to want thy former sweetneses. The Pleasures of Grace and Holiness run deeper and sweeter. Deeper, 1 Pet. 1. 8. Joy Unspeakable, and full of Glory. Sweeter, Prov. 3. 17. Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace. And which adds to their Ex-

cellency, they are not soon over, but are abiding, Psa. 16. last. They are full Pleasures, and Everlasting. *In thy Presence is fulness of Joy, and at thy Right-hand there are Pleasures for evermore.* Suppose a Man could have a Life of Pleasure, free from Care, Fear, Sorrow, and all the Encumbrances of Life, yet would not this be fit to set against an Immortal Crown of Glory. *As the crackling of Thorns under a Pot, so is the Laughter of the Fool; this also is Vanity.* Once more consider, Man, how Carnal Delights will go off at last: They will end in Bitterness: *'Tis better to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting, for that is the End of all Men, and the Living will lay it to Heart.*

Doct. The Lord is pleas'd to take different Methods, and not to tie himself to one and the same way in the Conversion of Souls.

1. I would first illustrate the Point.
2. Shew whence this Difference arises.
3. Apply it Casuistically.

1. The Lord has various Ways and Methods in the Conversion of Sinners to himself.

himself. *Acts 9. 3, 4.* A most strange and unheard-of Way, that a Sheet of Light should blind a Man, and strike him down to the Ground.

But more particularly,

1. Some have great legal Terrors, *Acts 9. 6.* Paul stands trembling and astonisht ; again, *Acts 16. 29.* the Gaoler came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, *Sirs, What must I do to be saved ?* Some are very Vile and Notorious Sinners before Conversion. The whole Country rings of their Prophaneness. And God, for the Vindication of his Honour, will have the Country ring too of their Terror and Remorse of Conscience.

2. Others, as great Sinners as the former, have very little Terror ; but are rather won by Love, than urg'd by Fear ; rather drawn by Kindness, than driven by Harshness ; melted by a gentle, small, still, Voice : As *Zaccheus* here is rejoicing as soon as converted. And *Matthew* the Publican, *Luke 5.* invites Christ to a Feast on the same Day he was brought Home to God. He could have had very little Delight in Feasting, had Convictions

been

been sharp, and his Soul fill'd with legal Terrors.

Some are Persons of Education and Light, and know where the Plaster is as soon as they see their Wound, nay, before they were wounded; such Persons are not kept long in Distress, the Mediator being not at all out of Sight.

The Spirit of Adoption breathes in them as soon as they come Home. Yet tho' not oppress'd with legal Terrors, they have a Sense of Sin, which hangs upon them all their Life. They see such Corruption in their Nature, as makes them to walk up and down, abhorring themselves in Dust and Ashes.

3. Some (as to their following Life) walk ever after their Conversion under a Spirit of Bondage. And Religion is to 'em little better than an House of Bondage. They are full of Humiliation; ever bound down with Fear. What *Paul* felt for a few Days, *Act*s 9. 9. And *he was Three Days without Sight, and did neither Eat nor Drink.* These feel all their Days. *Heman*, *Psa.* 88. was one of this Number, and thro' the whole of his Life. Again, *Heb.* 2. 15. *Thro' Fear of Death were all their Life-time subject*

subject to Bondage, whilst others of their Fellow Christians walk chearfully. They have seen their Wound, have applied the Remedy, have and do Believe the Promise of God, the Faithfulness of the Mediator, consequently that they are receiv'd, and their Souls are safe: And God has kept their Feet, so that they have not fallen into any particular gross Sin against Covenant to revive their Terrors.

Others that have been fill'd with Anguish of Spirit under the first Work upon 'em, when this has gone off, their Evidences have clear'd up so much the brighter; whilst those that had been always Civil, and under a pious Education, and could not perceive their Change so sensibly, have been always full of Doubts and Fears: Some have their Bondage frames at first, some have theirs all their Life: Some have theirs on particular Seasons; as when under some great outward Affliction, or inward Temptation, as in Paul's Case, 2 Cor. 12. 7. or some great fall into Sin; this was the Case of Peter, *When thou art converted strengthen thy Brethren.* His Recovery from his Fall cost him as much

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Anguish and Bitterness as a first Conversion : And upon that Account so call'd ; or some great and difficult Services, or Reproaches and Sufferings, for him, these may as much tend to let a Man down into his own Heart, and so to humble him, as Impressions of God's Wrath made upon his Spirit : And the procuring or settling Humiliation in our Souls, is God's Intendment in all or any of these abovenam'd Methods.

Some never had that we call the first Love. *Jer. 2. 2. I remember thee, the Kindness of thy Youth, the Love of thine Espousals, when thou didst follow me in the Wilderness, in a Land that was not sown.* Others not only understand what this means by their own joyful Experience, but have in those Days been as it were in Heaven: As *Paul* in his Rapture, *2 Cor. 12. 1, 2, 3, 4.* on which I Design a distinct Discourse when more at Leisure. Some few do keep their First-love all their Days : But they are very, very, few, (at least that I have heard of) tho' I have not been altogether negligent in my Enquiry on that Head. *Lastly,* There are that have an even Frame, not much lift up, or much cast down, and this I look upon

upon as the best Frame, most Honourable to God, and most Advantageous to the Spiritual Life.

4. In all Things none are exactly alike; not Two in an Hundred that have felt just the same things in all Circumstances, tho' in the Main they are all alike. As for Instance, there is in every One a Sense of Sin, as a defiling and damning Thing; great and oppressing Trouble of Spirit possibly there may not be. All are humbled, but all are not alike humbled. All see themselves lost and undone, but all do not cry out of this, and make a noise of their Spiritual Distresses. *Mary Magdalen* seems to have been a silent Weeper.

So they all have a Sight of Christ as the alone Remedy. Some make more haste to Jesus Christ than others; but they all come to him, tho' not running an equal pace. *Mat. 11. 28.* compar'd with *Jer. 2. latter end.*

Again, they all give up themselves to the Sanctifying Spirit, to be directed and led by him: And by this we know them to be converted indeed. *Rom. 8. 14.* *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.*

None

None must expect to find all these in their own Souls. Yet if they cannot find their own Case under some or other of these insisted on, they have Cause, and just Cause, to doubt of, and question, their Conversion to God.

Q. Whence does this Difference arise? Or what Account may be given why it is thus with some, and otherwise with others, that have as much Grace, and as sure and thorough a Work, wrought in them?

Ans. 1. Something may be attributed to a Natural Temper. Some are of a sad and melancholy Temper themselves, who can scarce bear to see another Laugh. Now Grace does not take away the Natural Temper, nor is it its Design, but only to rectifie it. Corruption has disorder'd it, Grace sets it right, and bids it go on. Thou shouldest not go about to have thy Natural Temper alter'd, but to have it sanctified, that thou may'st improve it for God.

Ans. 2. There is something to be attributed to the Ministry under which the Lord has plac'd them. For tho' the Term Legal Preacher is abusively us'd in our Day, whilst the most skilful

Preachers,

Preachers, (who know how to distinguish between Law and Gospel, and give both their due Honour; knowing that as the Gospel never Convinceth, so the Law never Converts, but both Law and Gospel concur in every true Conversion) are so accounted by those who have studied but One or Two Points in Divinity, and therefore can Preach nothing else: Yet there is a Ministry that may properly be called Legal, and a Ministry that may properly be called Evangelical: As the Ministry under which we sit is darker or clearer, more or less shewing Souls the Way to Christ, and what use to make of him in Religion, so will it be accordingly with the Spirits of the Hearers. By the way let me add, that is a corrupt Ministry, and 'tis unsafe to sit under it, that does not teach Souls how to walk with God, as well as how we are reconciled to him; which does not instruct Souls how to Live upon Christ, and to Christ, as their alone Justifier, Sanctifier and Saviour.

3. After all, 'tis a Dispensation, to some 'tis given, to others it is not given. *Isa. 61. 1, 2, 3.* Again, *2 Cor. 2.*

14, 15. Now Thanks be to God who always
canseth us to Triumph in Christ.

§. Do not trouble thy self so much about this, that thou wast not wrought upon in this way, or in that ; but see that the Work it self be wrought, and that thou art converted to God.

Case. Do all know the time of their Conversion? For 'tis plain some do. **1 Thes. 1. 9.** *They themselves shew of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from Idols, to serve the Living and True God.*

Answ. No, there are many that have the Grace of God, that could not, cannot, tell when the Lord was pleased first to enter into their Hearts. Persons of a Serious and Religious Education have been converted without Noise ; Grace did insensibly slide into their Hearts, without Notice, as into Lydia's ; ever civiliz'd, and under restraining Grace, nourish'd up among the Words of Truth, they can't tell the time when the Truth first became sweet to them ; only they can say with the Blind Man, *John 9: Whereas I was blind, now I see.* We are convinc'd of the Sin of

Nature.

Nature, that we are liable to Wrath; we know our Remedy lies in Jesus Christ, to him we have yielded. God has (adored be his Name) open'd our Hearts, and let in his Word, as he did into *Lydia's*. But when it was first done he only knows. He only who first knit our Hearts to Christ, knows the time when it was first done.

D 2 DIS-

DISCOURSE IV.

LUK. XIX. 7, 8.

And when they saw it, they all murmur'd, saying, That he was gone to be Guest with a Man that is a Sinner. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my Goods I give to the Poor; and if I have taken any thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him Fourfold.

WE are now come to Consider the Consequents or Effects of his Conversion.

1. The World's Rage is a common and very usual Consequent of a Man's Conversion. They are Angry; they murmur

murmur the World will not turn to God, yet are angry if one of their Companions break off from their League with Satan, and become truly Serious and Godly. They will not follow Christ, nor are they willing any others should. *Luke 5. 29, 30.* And Levi made him a great Feast in his own House, and there was a great Company of Publicans, and of others that sat down with them. But their Scribes and Pharisees murmur'd, &c. Make that Text speak English, in the Language of our Day, and it will be to this Sense, These ignorant People run after Factious, Schismatical, Teachers; they are our Parishioners, and we are their proper Ministers, having a legal Establishment, they murmur.

Quest. But why can't the Ungodly bear this?

Answ. Man is angry at the Grace of God; his Eye is Evil, because God's Eye is Good. In this the Ungodly do mainly resemble the Devil, who will have a Quarrel against every thing in God, and against every thing of God, that he sees in Souls. Some of the Popish Clergy, bitterly set against Beza for his turning Protestant, objected to

him, that when he was a young Man he had written wanton Poems, or Verses; *This Man* (says he) *Envies me the Grace of God.*

2. The Consequent or Effect of it upon his own Heart, and that was a great and mighty Change. *Zaccheus* stood, that is, in *Medio*: Signifying his open, publick, Profession. This Effect was Twofold.

1. Justice, which appears in his Resolution to make Restitution.

Quest. But what does he mean by this, If I have wrong'd or defrauded any Man?

Answ. 'Tis as if he had said, I am willing, but, alas, there is so much Sin twisted with my ill-gotten Estate, that unless they put in their Claim, I can't restore, for I know not to whom I shou'd do it. But I speak this openly, that those who know I have wrong'd them, may come to me, and I will make Restitution.

2. His Heavenliness. The World is no longer a sweet Morsel to him, as it was before his Conversion; which we may see by his abundant Alms. *The half*

of my Goods I give to the Poor; as also by exceeding the Demands of the Law in making Restitution. In some Cases a Man was to restore Fivefold, *Exod.* 22. 1. If he stays till legally convicted, and the Goods were found in his Hand, he was to restore double, *Exod.* 22. 4. But in Case of a voluntary, penitent, Confession, as his was, here he was only oblig'd to add a Fifth Part, according to *Num.* 5. 6, 7. But as an Effect of that real and potent Change Grace had made upon his Heart, and as an Evidence of the Heavenliness of his Temper, he gives back more than the Letter of the Law requires of him.

From the Words thus divided and explain'd,

Observ. 1. All the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit of God do generally displease the World. They do not like his Works of Providence, much less his Works of Grace. Not a Man of 'em invites Christ to his own House, and yet they are discontented that he goes into the House of Zaccheus. *I Cor.* 1. 26, 27. *You see your Calling, Brethren, not many Wise Men after the Flesh, not many Mighty,*

Mighty, not many Nobles, are called. You see your Calling, Brethren ; as if he had said, you see, Brethren, in what Channel the Grace of God generally runs, upon the Mean, the Vile, the Poor, the Base, in the Eyes of the World. Be you not offended at God's Way. The World, and the Church of God, ever were, and ever will be, Two Opposite Parties. Those that do not Love God, will always have something or other to say against God. He calls and gathers to himself such as the World think are the most unfit, as *Manasseh*, *Matthew the Publican*, *Paul*, *Zaccheus*, *Magdalen* ; tho' this very thing does greatly endear Christ to heavy laden Sinners. *Luke 15.*

1. Then drew near unto him all the Publicans and Sinners for to hear him. What was it that drew 'em? Why, Verse 2, it was a common Report, and cast at Christ by way of Reproach, that this Man receiveth Sinners. This made sensible Sinners then, and ever since, to flock after him, and delight to hear from him in Gospel Ordinances. As to their Parts, they are generally Mean : The Wits of the Age are seldom wrought upon by the Grace of God. So far are they

from

from having the Honour of the World, that they are generally a despised, reproached, Company : The Gospel Offer is made to all, but mostly *the Poor receive the Gospel.* God passes by such as the World makes most account of ; who think themselves more prepar'd for Grace, and in a much fairer way for Heaven, than those that the Lord does take. Hence they Murmur, *Luke 15.* The Elder Brother was so offended he would not go in. The Lord Christ knew how much these Persons would be out of Humour at his Favour shew'd to this poor Sinner ; yet he will go on, he will do it. I observe hereupon, that neither the Envy nor Discontent of these hinder *Zaccheus's Joy :* Nor the Envy and Wrath of the Elder Brother stifled the Musick and Dancing that was in the House. God never repents of his Gifts of Grace. *The Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance ;* nor can any thing in the World hinder Christ's Joy in the Soul, or the Soul's Joy in him.

2. *Obs.* It is not the Light of Reason, but of Grace, that must shew a Man what he is in himself. Now see how *Zaccheus stands and loathes himself, and resolves*

resolves to cast away every Sin. Grace in the Heart always breeds such a dislike of Sin, that they Two are incompatible. According to our Love to Christ, such is our hatred of Sin : *You that love the Lord, hate Evil.*

3. Obs. Tho' Morality is not Grace, yet there is no such thing as Grace without it. There may be Morality where there is not Grace : A Gracious Action, and a Moral Action, are the same for the Matter of 'em : A Gracious Action flows from a renew'd Nature as its Principle, and aims at the Glory of God : A Moral Action differs from the other as to its Principle and End. There can then be no Grace without Morality. Grace includes Morality. *Zaccheus* is become Gracious, now see how exactly Just he is, and will restore : Without Restitution Repentance is but feigned. There must be Alms, but these must proceed from, and grow upon, the Root of Justice : Man ! First pay thy Debts, then give Alms, else thou givest that which is another's, not thine own. This he does presently, not staying till Death.

1. *Ques.* Is every Penitent that has wrong'd another, oblig'd upon his Repentance to give as he did, half his Goods?

Ans. There was a time when all was requir'd, and laid at the Apostles Feet. But I must enter this Cautionary to prevent Mistakes; this was a Duty only to those that cou'd comply with it, as our Lord somewhere said in another Case, *He that can receive this saying, let him receive it.* To go on; if in some Circumstances of Life all shou'd be call'd for, then all should be rendred. Such a *Quantum* however should at all times be given, as would shew that the Love of the World was dead in us.

2. *Quest.* How should I restore?

Ans. 1. If the Scripture plainly determines thee, as it does in some Cases, do not baulk thy Duty, or disturb the Rest of thy Conscience, for all the World.

2. When the Scripture gives no particular or full Direction, look to the Law of the Land, what that directs in the Case: Or to the Civil Law, which is the Law of Nature, and the Law of Nations, which is indeed but an

Expli-

Explication of the Roman Law of the Twelve Tables.

Obs. 4. A^t Gracious Person upon his Conversion immediately dismisses his beloved Sin, casts it off, and sets himself more against that than any other Sin. Every one, or at least most Persons, have a stronger Byass upon 'em to some Sins than to others. Grace strikes chiefly at the beloved Sin, into which Original Sin empties its strength. If we hate and forsake Sin as Sin, it is because it is contrary to God; and that Reason will as well hold against all Sin. *For he that offends,* says the Apostle *Jannes,* in one Point, that is knowingly and wilfully, *is Guilty of all;* *for he that says,* *Thou shalt not commit Adultery,* says also, *Thou shalt not Steal.* Some one Lust damned Herod, and so it may thee.

When I say a true Convert does this presently, I do not mean it so, as if some Sins did not take more time to mortifie than others. No Sin is so thoroughly mortified in this Life, but that it may at particular times stir again. The Sins of our Complexion will not wholly let us forget what they were. The scent

of 'em sticks to our Cloaths : But this I say, that he immediately sets himself against them. His setting himself against this Sin, discovers his Sincerity ; for it is a denying our Carnal Self. To deny Carnal Self for God, shews us to be so far sincere and upright for God. *Hos. 14.* 8. Ephraim *shall say, what have I to do any more with Idols ? &c.* From the Words thus expounded, take this

Doct. The Efficacy and Power of the Grace of God is mightily seen in the Conversion of a Sinner. When Grace comes and changes the Heart, the Heart soon changes its wonted Objects : It loves what before it hated ; it hates what before it lov'd. Heaven and Earth look very differently from what they did. The Love of Earth goes off, the Love of Heaven enters the Soul. *Luke 5. 27.* Matthew the Publican did not so much as ask time " to go home to make his Will, " to set his Affairs in Order, but immediately shuts up Shop, and follows Christ. How did the Neighbourhood, think you, deride and scoff him for throwing off his Business, and following the Carpenter's Son ? But the Light of

Grace is both convincing and affecting: It convinces us of the Folly and Danger of our former Courses; we so see the Evil of Sin, the Vanity of the World, the Excellency of Heaven, the Shortness of Time, the Worth of the Soul, that we are deeply affected with them; and so affected, that we cannot but obey those Convictions. When the kind Hour of God's Design is come, all Blocks and Hindrances in the Way of a Sinner's Conversion, shall be remov'd: Nothing shall keep the Soul any longer from coming home to God.

M E T H O D.

Here let us enquire,

i. What Conversion is.

It is no less than a deliberate Dedication of our selves to God. We hear Christ calling us, and at his Call we withdraw our selves from a worldly Course, *Eph. 2. 2.* from the Service of Sin and Satan, refusing any longer *to serve divers Lusts and Pleasures*, *Titus 3. 3.* We now pass over the Right of our selves to the Lord; grieving that we have lived so long unacquainted with him; *Without God in the World*, *Eph. 2. 12.* We are

are yielding our selves to God, *as those that are alive from the dead*, Rom. 6. 13. both what we are, and what we have ; as Jesus Christ (considered as Mediator) was wholly God's Servant, entirely, and in every thing, his : So we, 1 Cor. 3. last, are Christ's ; that is, we aim to be so ; we do not pretend to look upon our selves hereafter as our own ; though other Lords have had Dominion over us, yet now from henceforth we make mention only of his Name.

More particularly.

1. It is a turning from the Creature to God, as the Fountain of all true Happiness. We begin to account the Enjoyment of God as the suprem Felicity of our Souls. Satan gives Man a wrong End, and thrusts the Creatures, and Bodily Comforts, into God's Place, and Man is well content it should be so. He goes on, *loving the Creatures more than the Creator* ; loving *Pleasures more than God*, 2 Tim. 3. 2. And all this time never misses God. All his Thoughts, Cares, and Enquiries, are after a worldly Happiness. Psal. 4. 6, 7. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good ; any worldly good ?*

good? The Natural Man knows no higher, and therefore desires nothing higher. But converting Grace alters his Esteem and Judgment of Things; now his Prayers, Desires, and Affections, run another Way. *Psal. 4. 6.* The Natural Man was for any Good, the Gracious Person only for the Favour of God. *Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in my Heart, more than in the time that their Corn and their Wine increased.* That is, the Natural man cannot be more pleased and delighted with the World, than I am in God, at such times as I have the Light of his Countenance. He values God, and his Interest in him, above all; and loves him with a suprem Love. *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none on Earth that my Soul desires besides thee:* Now he is turning to the Lord with his whole Heart. *Turn ye to me, even to me, with all your Heart,* *Joel 2. 12.* Some return, but not to the Most High, as the Prophet complains. Some set out of Egypt, but never reach to Canaan.

2. From all false Trusts and Dependencies, to depend purely and alone on the Righteousness of Jesus Christ for Salvation.

vation. Every unconverted Person has a secret Trust in something short of Christ. This was the ruining Mistake of the Jewish Nation; *Rom. 10. 3.* *Going about to establish their own Righteousness, they did not submit to the Righteousness of God.* The Lord Christ calls himself the Way; *John 14. 6.* *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;* that is, I am the true Way to Life; *No Man comes to the Father, but by me:* 'Tis his Office to bring Sinners to God. *1 Pet. 3. 18.* Therefore he suffer'd for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God. If then we rely upon any thing in our selves that shall do this for us, we put Christ out of Office: No Sinner is converted till he comes back to God, from whom he had wander'd. None can come to God, but whom Jesus shall bring to him. So that so long as a Person is unacquainted with the Person and Office of the Mediator, his Conversion is not wrought, his Work is not done.

3. From Sin to Holiness; *From Darkness to Light,* *Act. 26. 18.* and from the Power of Satan unto God. To Holiness, as the Way to Heaven; as you would turn a Man that had lost his Way, into

the right Way again, Rom. 6. 4. We should walk in newness of Life ; and were raised up from the Death of Sin on purpose. He what in him lyes unweaves the Web of Sin he has woven. The Jaylor repenting of his Cruelty, washes Paul's Stripes. *Mary Magdalen* weeps over her Wantonness. Her Hair is no longer Plaited into Towers, but is become a Towel to wipe her Lord's Feet. *Zacchæus*, that had oppressed, oppresses no longer, but restores. *Paul*, who did persecute, now preaches, and builds up the Churches.

Quest. How is a true Convert turn'd from Sin ?

Answ. 1. He is set against every Sin. He does not make any Sin his Choice. An Hypocrite exchanges one Sin for another ; lays down one, and takes up another ; Jer. 2. 36. *Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy Way ? Thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.*

Answ. 2. The Life remains, but not the Power of Sin. Ahab sold himself to Sin. Others are so willingly the Captives of Sin, that they do not feel Sin's Power, because it rules them by their own Choice : Nor does

does the Love of Sin remain, *Rom.* 7. Through the whole, *Paul* complains under the Tyranny of Sin, as a Man in a State of Slavery and Bondage. It remains indeed but his Burthen, his Sorrow, his continual Sorrow, his greatest Sorrow he has in this World. His Reproaches, his Afflictions, go not so near his Heart as his Sin. V. 15. *That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* Again, V. 19. *For the Good that I would, I do not; but the Evil which I would not, that I do.* V. 24. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?*

4. From a Worldly, to a Spiritual, Worship. John 4. *Our Fathers worshipped in this Mountain, and ye say, that Jerusalem is the Place where Men ought to worship.* Christ answers, *The Hour cometh, and now is, when ye shall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.* No Relative Holiness of Places now. A Ship, an House, a Barn, a Wood, is as acceptable to God as a Consecrated Chapel. They that worship the Father, must, as our Saviour there goes on, *worship him in Spirit and in Truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.* *God is a Spirit, and they*

they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth. This Man now places the greatest Comfort of his Life in Communion with God. *1 John 1. 3, 4.*
Our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and these things write we unto you, that your Joy may be full. The fullest Joy such an one has on Earth, comes in at this Door. A natural Conscience will put a Man upon paying some Homage to God: But he considers not the Principle from which it must proceed, a Regenerate Heart. Nor the Manner, that it must be according to God's own Appointment in his Word. *See that thou make all things according to the Pattern shewed thee in the Mount.* The Work done, quiets a Natural Conscience; but a Regenerate Person is not easie, unless he meets with God, and has Communion with him in his Worship. *Psal. 43. 4. Then will I go to the Altar of God.* He recalls himself; I will look farther than so; *I will go unto God himself, my exceeding Joy.*

2. Properties of Conversion.

1. The Change that Converting Grace makes, is universal. *I hate every false Way.*

Object. None so holy but step awry into some false Way.

Answ. 'Tis only said, therefore *I hate* every such Way : Nor can any Man live and not sin : But the meaning is, he lives in the allow'd Practice of no known Sin, nor in the allow'd Neglect of any known Duty.

2. He prays, *Zeck. 12. 10.* The Spirit of Grace you see, by that Text, is a Spirit of Supplication. So *Paul*, *Acts 9. 11.* *Behold he prays.* As stubborn as he was before, he is now brought upon his Knees. Communion with God can't be kept up without it ? Hence Souls, under their first Work, are more giving themselves up to, and abounding in, Prayer. *Ephraim* dwells now upon his Knees, *Jer. 31. 18.* bemoaning himself, and crying, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.* Till Satan persuades them that they shall tire themselves, with so great Labour and Diligence in the Spiritual Life ; neither is it needful ; others, that are by all accounted solid Christians, do not give themselves so great trouble ; therefore, Soul, spare thy self ; hereupon the Soul grows more slight and careless ; then

then immediately it loses its first Love; which, to that degree, is seldom recovered more in this World.

3. The Heart is cast into the Mould of the Gospel, and is learning Resignation to God. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* He chuses an Holy Walk, as the prescrib'd Path leading to Heaven. God is *setting this Man apart for himself*, Psal. 4. And therefore, in requital to such Love, he is setting himself apart for God. They, 2 Cor. 8. 5. *First gave their own selves to the Lord, and then to us, by the Will of God.* And the Divine Flame of Love in his Soul is making its daily ascensions up towards the Throne of God. His Heart loves to be where Christ is. He longs to grow purer and purer. 1 John 3. 3. *Is now purifying himself, as God is pure.*

4. This Work of Conversion (till the Soul has been once sealed) is always more or less attended with Suspicion and Fear. The Question runs round among Christ's Apostles, **LORD, IS IT I?** Every one doubting of himself, but none answering another. So *David, Psal. 139.* *Search me, O God, and know my Heart; try me, and know my Thoughts; and see if there be*

be any wicked Way in me ; and lead me in the Way Everlasting.

5. They desire Growth; *1 Pet. 2. 2.* As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. As they are bid to do so, so it is their Property to do so; their Thirst is now quenched after the World; they have a better and more honourable Thirst upon 'em. They would be more holy, more every way LIKE GOD, never satisfied till they do get up to Heaven.

6. Grace has struck at the Root of Pride. They are now humbled under a sight of Sin. Before they could not think Evil of theinselves: Now they see nothing in themselves but Evil; and can think better of every one than of themselves.

7. They would have others converted too, *Luke 5. 29.* Levi thought then, (as Melanthon did since) that Jesus Christ would convert all he should speak to with the same ease he converted him. Therefore you see there he invites a great Company to Supper, that Christ might have Opportunity of speaking to his Companions. And Levi made him a great Feast in his own House, and there was a great

3. What are the Hindrances of Conversion?

1. Stupid Ignorance. *John 4. 10. If thou knewest the Gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked, and he would have given thee Living Water.* The Old Creation began in Light, so does the New. *Isai. 6. 10. Shut their Eyes, lest they see with their Eyes, and understand with their Hearts, and be converted.* A Man may have great Knowledge, and not be converted. (The Devil has vast stores of Knowledge) yet no Man can be converted that has not Knowledge.

2. A False Righteousness. Some think they are not so sinful as to need Repentance, or to need a better Righteousness than their own. *There is a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes, yet are not cleansed from their filthiness.*

3. When Christ's Righteousness is apply'd to the Soul that has not been as yet wounded with a Sense of Sin. Hence no unconverted Souls are so hardly wrought

wrought upon as those who were never wounded for Sin, but yet hear daily of Christ, and the Gospel Way of Salvation by him. They have the Remedy already in their Hand; how will you persuade 'em that they must now, after all, be first wounded, that the Remedy may take place, and a farther Work be wrought in the Heart?

4. Ungodly Company. Hence, *Gal. 1. 16.* *Paul*, after the Grace of God had touched his Heart, presently left off conferring with Flesh and Blood; who will prove very bad, nay, the very worst of Counsellors in Matters relating to Salvation.

5. Sinning against the Light. Such the Lord does oft-times give up to their own hardness, which they thereby contract, and suffer them to run on headlong to Destruction. *Prov. 29. 1.* *He that being often reprov'd, hardens his Heart, shall suddenly be destroy'd, and that without remedy.* When Men shut their Eyes against the Light, God often then closes them up: They close 'em voluntarily, and stubbornly, God closes them judicially. *Isaiah 6. 9, 10.* compar'd with *John 12. 40.* They would not

see the Light, lest they should be led into the Way of Holiness by it; well then, they shall not see it. 'Tis but just. And after Souls have been try'd a while, and yet will persist in their Unbelief and Impenitency, now God's Oath comes and shuts them up unalterably in their miserable State. The Penitent Believer shall certainly be saved. He has God's Oath for him. *Heb. 6. 18, 19.* The Gospel-Sinner, that continues in his Impenitency and Unbelief, shall most certainly be damned, because God's Oath lies against him. *Heb. 3. 18.* *To whom I swear in my Wrath that they should not enter into my Rest.*

§. 4. Exhortation to persuade poor miserable Souls to turn and be happy. Either thou must turn or burn. Is it not better to be preserved in Vinegar, than to rot in Honey?

i. Thou art perpetually under the Wrath of God. *He is angry with the Wicked every Day.* Where-ever thou art, whatever thou art doing, in what Company soever thou art making thy self merry, yet, Man, think with thy self; am I yet got from under the Wrath of God, or no? If thou turn not, *Psal.*

7. 12. He will whet his Sword: He hath bent his Bow, and made it ready: He hath also prepar'd for him the Instruments of Death. Thou art under the Curse of the Law, and every Day liable to Hell. The Curse hangs over thy Head, though God forbears thee. His Wrath, *John 3.* last, is said *to abide upon such*, though they don't feel it. O, what a dreadful Roll of Curses is there in *Deut. 28.* Cursed within Doors, and without; at Home, and A-broad; in City, and in the Field. If Death comes, thou art presently in Hell. What a trouble it would be to any Man to be perpetually liable to an Arrest every time he looks out of Doors? O how dreadful this Case, to be ever on the brink of an everlasting flaming Hell! Reader, if thou wast truly sensible of thy Case, thou couldst not read these Lines with a dry Eye. O that God would affect, and turn thee now, that he may not hereafter turn thee *into Hell, with the Wicked, and with the Nations that forget God.* Take it kindly of him that tells thee that the Way thou art in is leading thee to Hell. *Psal. 1.* last, *The Way of the ungodly shall perish.*

2. All Ordinances and Providences mean and aim at thy Conversion. All Ordinances, *1 John 2. 1.* *These things write I unto you, that you sin not.* All Providences, *Amos 4.* thus and thus, says God, have I done unto you, and yet *ye have not turned unto me, saith the Lord.* *Hosea 2. 6.* See what Way God takes to bring Men to their right Minds; to make them first thoughtful and serious; (for Consideration is the first Step to Conversion, if they shall, as *Solomon speaks in his Dedication Prayer, bethink themselves and pray,* bethink themselves and return) therefore the Wise God afflicts us, disappoints us, in the World, on purpose to bring us into a thinking frame or posture of Mind. Therefore says God there, *Behold I will hedge up thy Way with Thorns, and make a Wall, that she shall not find her Paths;* and *she shall follow after her Lovers, but shall not overtake 'em;* and *she shall seek 'em, but shall not find them:* Now what shall be the effect of all this? See in the following words how the Design of God takes place; *Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me than now.*

If

If he brings a Soul into the Wilderness,
'tis with a Design of Grace.

3. It is a very high Priviledge, that Man, after his Revolt and Apostacy from God, may return again to him. *Isai. 55. 1. Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters; and he that hath no Money, come and buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price.* How would the fallen Angels rend the Air with with their joyful Shouts was but this Liberty proclaim'd to them?

God the Father would have you return. *As I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the Death of a Sinner, but that the Wicked turn from his Way, and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways, for why will you die, O House of Israel?* Jesus Christ would have you return. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy Children together, as an Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not?* The Holy Spirit shews his willingness, whilst he stands at the Doors and knocketh, if any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and Sup with him, and be with

me. Your Relations long impatiently for the Day of your Conversion. *O that Ishmael might live before thee!* How often have some of 'em been sighing this Prayer before God! Can you see 'em? Again, I ask you, can you see 'em come out of their Closets with their red Eyes, whilst they have been weeping over their dead Children: Dead, I mean, *in Trespasses and Sins?* Can you see this, and not be concern'd about your own Souls? Once more, Saints on Earth, and the Saints in Heaven, and the Holy Angels of God, would rejoice to see this Day. *There is Joy in the Presence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth, more than ninety and nine just Persons that need no Repentance.*

4. There is no true Rest for the Soul short of God. Psal. 43. *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul.* We turn but from one Vanity to another, till we return to God. *If ye will enquire, enquire; come ye.* The longer you continue in your Natural State, the farther you go from God.

Object. None can Convert himself.

Answ. The Duty is ours, the Strength whereby we must perform it is God's. Phil. 2. 13. *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling; for 'tis God that worketh in you.* To shake off Sloth, 'tis said, *Work out your own Salvation;* to prevent Discouragement, 'tis said, *God worketh in you.* Go then to God in Prayer, and put him upon working. Jer. 31. 18. *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.*

DISCOURSE V.

LUKE XIX. 9, 10.

*And Jesus said unto him, This Day
is Salvation come to this House,
forsomuch as He is also the Son
of Abraham. For the Son of
Man is come to seek and to
save that which is lost.*

WE are now come to the last thing in this Notable Story, Christ's Answer to, or Apology for, *Zacchæus*.

Let me first divide and explain the Words; in which,

1. Good News to this poor Sinner, *This Day is Salvation come to this House*, I am come who am the Author of Salvation, and I may bring it to whom I will;

will; for I am as the Procurer, so the Lord Dispencer, of it.

Quest. How said to come to this House?

Answ. The Lord comes more near to us at some times than at others. Isa. 55. 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.* There are Seasons of Grace wherein God comes nearer to us than at other times, and will be more easily found of us; when God takes one in a Family, he means that as a Patern and Pledge of what he will do for others: As Paul's Conversion was a Patern to the whole unregenerate World, so the Conversion of a particular Soul, in an House or Family, is to that Family a PATERN of GRACE. Such are truly in effect told, that if they will come in, Christ stands with his Arms open, ready to receive 'em; and they are thereby invited to lay hold on their present Opportunity, as those of Gennesaret, Matth. 14. last. Messengers are upon the Lord Christ's Arrival thither, sent forthwith through that Island, to summon

mon them, or give 'em notice, that Christ was come, and now was their Opportunity of bringing their Sick, and those that had need of Healing.

2. Christ's Apology to the Jews for *Zacchens*, or his own Work upon him, *He is the Seed of Abraham as well as they.* Though he is a Gentile, yet he is a Believer. The Seed of Abraham does not lye among the Jews only, but also among the Gentiles. Rom. 11.

7. Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the Election hath obtain'd it, and the rest were blinded. Still I do nothing in all this contrary to, or beyond, the Commission receiv'd from my Father.

Quest. But why does he Address this Discourse to *Zacchens*, which is meant to the Jews there present?

Answ. He would not throw away his Words; it would avail nothing to speak to the Jews, they would still murmur: He will therefore comfort *Zacchens*, who may be suppos'd to be aggriev'd and troubled at the envious Censures of his Neighbours.

3. Confirmation of all this from hence.

1. It was the Errand on which the Father sent him.

2. It was his Design in coming, to seek and to save, *Tò ἀπολωλός, that which was lost,* be it never so mean, whether among the *Jew or Gentile.*

Where,

1. A Description of Man's sad Condition, by Nature he is a lost Person.

2. Condescending Care and Love of Jesus Christ, he came so great a Journey to seek him up, and to save him.

From the Words thus divided and explain'd,

Obs. 1. When Christ comes, Salvation comes to that House. Our Interest in Christ, gives us a Right and Title to Eternal Life; and introduces and plants Life in our Souls. When he is receiv'd and entertain'd by a Soul, he then becomes a Saviour, *John i. 12.* Our Salvation stands only in the Favour of Christ, and our Interest in him.

Again.

Again, The Conversion of some is so plain and sensible, that the very Day thereof is known, talked of with Pleasure, and remembred for ever. Some few can say, On such a Day, and in such a Place, I was wrought upon. 'Twas so indeed with *Paul*, but it is not so with all. Grace slides insensibly into the Hearts of some without noise and notice; and the Kingdom of Grace comes not with Observation as to them.

2. Joyful Tidings to us poor Gentiles who write and read these Lines, in that a BELIEVING GENTILE is as much a Son of *Abraham*, as a believing Jew, Gal. 3. last. The Partition Wall that once was up, and kept us at a distance, is now thrown down. O what solemn Thanks and Adorations owe we to the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, that has of his own accord demolish'd it, and has given us as free Liberty of Access to himself, as the Jew by Nature!

3. If Christ will save a Soul, he must first seek it. We do not seek him till he has first found us. *Prov.* 1. 20. He stands and calls, but that will not do, therefore

therefore he goes out into the Streets, and fetches them in. *Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her Voice in the Streets : How long, ye Simple Ones, will ye love Simplicity ? And the Scorners delight in their Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge ? Turn you, &c.* Isai. 65. 1. *I am sought of them that asked not for me : I am found of them that sought me not : I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a Nation that was not called by my Name.* He first chuses us, and then we chuse him. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.* Yes, they did chuse him, but understand it only of Priority of Choice. He first loves us, and then we love him. We love him, says St. John, because he first loved us.

From the whole of the Words thus expounded, take this

Doct. It was Christ's Condescension and Gracious Design in coming to seek and save lost Souls.

I enquire,

1. How Man is said to be lost:

G

2. Shew

2. Shew it was Christ's Design in Coming ; and 'tis still his Employment to seek and save lost Souls.

3. The Condescending Grace conspicuous in all this.

4. The Uses.

I. How is Man said to be lost?

1. Lost to God. So the Prodigal was accounted by his Father. *This my Son was dead, and is alive; was lost, and is found.* Lost to God, inasmuch as he has no Glory from him. True: *He serves his Generation,* and honours God as a God of Nature; as the Chirping Sparrow, or Singing Nightingale, glorifies its Creator: But he does not give God his principally designed Glory. The Glory of the New Creation was most in the Creator's Eye, when he laid the Foundation of this World; hence after Conversion; which is nothing else but Redemption apply'd, a Soul is said to be found, and again to be redeemed to God, out of all Kindreds, and Tongues, and People, &c.

2. He is lost to the Church of God, to his Relations and Friends. As they would

would rejoice in his Conversion, so at present they mourn in his continu'd Revolt and Apostacy.

CHILDREN, you know not what Sorrow and Grief of Heart your Parents have upon your account. Many a Prayer, many a Tear, you neither see nor hear any thing of: All which, if they be not answered in your Conversion, will tend to make your Hell the hotter.

CHILDREN! What hopes can godly Parents or Friends have of you in your Course and Way? What hope could *Isaac* and *Rebekah* have of their Son *Esaū*, when he could not so much as bear to be in the House with them, could not bear their godly Counsel and Company, but runs as far from them as he can, and from Ordinances too, and rather chuses *Mount Seir*, a Place fit for Game and Pleasure?

O Soul! Shall I prevail with thee to sit down and consider thy lost State? *Micha* lost his Gods (that yet were no Gods) and how does he cry out under his supposed Loss? *Ye have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?* The People of God mourn if they lose the Light

of God's Countenance for a time only; whereas thou hast lost him, and art like to lose him, for ever, and yet art merry, although Salvation is as impossible to thee in thy present State, as it is to reach the Stars, to stop the Race of the Sun, or alter the Course of Day and Night. There cannot be a more sad Demonstration given, that thou art lost indeed, than this; thou art wholly insensible of, and unaffected about, this thy Loss.

Reader, I beseech thee in the Bowels of Christ, and as thou lovest thy own Soul, that thou wilt consider, and talk with thy self a little over this very Matter; O my Soul, are these things so, and am I still secure? Can I rise and go to Bed in a Christless State?

2. It was Christ's Design in Coming, and it is still his Employment to seek and save lost Souls.

1. He saves 'em. If it be ask'd how? I answer, by his Blood, Col. 1. 20. Having made Peace through the Blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself. By the Merit of his Cross he purchas'd Redemption: This is the Procuring Cause of Salvation. He washes away

away our Guilt; and so dissolves the Obligation under which we lay to Punishment. Then he acts in the Power of his Royalty ; that is, as a King, and applies this purchas'd Redemption by the efficacy of his Spirit, in cleansing us from our filthiness. *Ephes. 5. 26.* *That he might sanctifie and cleanse it by the washing of Water by the Word.*

2. He seeks them in order to save them. When on Earth he walks up and down, even to weariness. *John 4. Being weary, he sat thus on the Well.* Now still he sets up a Candle in the Ministry of the Word, and while the Ministry is striking Light out of the Word, the Spirit of God causes some Sparks to fly into this Conscience, and some into that ; the Word invites and enlightens the Mind : The Spirit enclines the Will, and draws the Heart. *Song 5. He put in his Hand by the hole of the Door.*

At other times he sends out Afflictions to fetch in his Wanderers. All his Providences tend to this, either to convert or to build up Souls, when they are already come into the House of God.

Quest. How does the Cross do this? Or how do Afflictions tend hereunto?

Answ. They tend to make the Mind more attentive. *Jer. 22. 21.* I spake unto thee in thy Prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear : This hath been thy manner from thy Youth, that thou obey'st not my Voice. And also more solid ; therefore 'tis said, *In the Day of Adversity consider.* Again, *Eccles. 7. 2.* It is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting ; for that is the end of all Men, and the Living will lay it to Heart. Many Thousands had been lost for ever, had not the Rod of God been laid upon 'em. The Rod is not more necessary in the Family, in the Education of our Children, than the Cross in the Hand of God is for our Spiritual Profit. The Question is not, whether God could not deal with us some other way ? So he could without Ordinances ; but considering the Constitution and Frame of Humane Nature, and the whole Make of Man, as he is, we cannot thrive in the Spiritual Life without it. I Appeal to the Spiritual Experience of all those that are not unacquainted with God's Way with his People, whether it be not thus Hezekiah said, *He would walk softly all his Days.* Again, *Thou saidst thou wouldst*

no more transgress; (so broad awake we are under the smart of the Rod) but our Purposes are soon broken, and we forget the Vows of God upon us; so that Afflictions must not only rise up a Second time, but a Seventh; nay, Seventy times Seven. The Prodigal had never return'd to his Father's House again, had he not been in Straits: Nay, had not those Straits been so hard upon him that he knew not where else to go.

2. As they tend to wean us from the World, and all Creature Comforts. *Hof.*
2. 14. God brings his into a Wilderness, that so he may have an Opportunity at last of speaking *comfortably unto them*. But mind V. 6. He first stops up her Way with Thorns, clogs it with such Difficulties, she can no way deliver her self from. The Prodigal is brought so low, he wants a piece of Bread before he would determine to return to his Father. Then, says he, and not till then, *I will arise, and go to my Father.* Then says the Church in *Osee*, *I will return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me than now.*

3. What

3. What Condescension and Grace were evidenc'd herein.

Answ. He tells us over and over this was his Design in Coming. O wondrous Care of Christ over poor abject Man! 'Tis a wonder that any Man or Woman on Earth should be saved, since we are brought so low by the Fall: But that he should disregard the World of Angels, and look over into ours, is astonishing Goodness. *Prov. 8.*

4. *Unto you, O Men, I call, and my Voice is to the Sons of Men.* His Care concerning us is represented and set out under the Similitude of a diligent Shepherd, who leaves the Ninety and Nine feeding in the Wilderness, where they are safe, and goes to seek that one that is lost. Then when he might have spurn'd at it with his Foot, because it caus'd him all this Trouble, he notwithstanding (because it was tired, and unable to go) lays it upon his Shoulder, and brings it home, *Luke 15. 3.—7.* and is exceeding tender of it. *Isai. 40. 11.* *He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd:* ('tis a Prophecy of Christ, and his kind Treatment of Souls) *He shall gather the Lambs*

Lambs with his Arm, and carry them in his Bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with Young. The Ancients (as we have it handed to us by a Modern Writer) were so affected with this Condescension of the Son of God, that they us'd to Engrave this Emblem upon their Sacred Chalices, or Sacramental Cups, A SHEPHERD WITH A SHEEP UPON HIS SHOULDER. O, what doth this Call for? Sure no less than our high and admiring Thoughts. I and my Companions were all as Sheep wandering from God, all of us equally lost on the Wastes of the World: They were, Lord, more worth thy seeking than I. Such an One could have done thee more Service than Hundreds of such as I. O how, how, is it, Lord, *Thou hast manifested thy self to me, and not unto the World?* Shew thy thankfulness by loving and obeying him.

Use i. Exhortation.

Labour to see thy self thus lost, and be restless till thou art got out of it. Thy Civility, thy good Nature, and excellent Temper, cannot save a lost Soul. Thou needest an Interest in Christ. It was thy Union with the first *Adam* that undid thee:

thee: So thy Union with Christ saves thee. *1 Cor. 15. 22. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Use 2. Of Encouragement to the Young Convert.

Thy Faith is yet very weak, and thy Fears must needs be proportionably strong, in that thou hast as yet no Experience to strengthen thy Faith. Experience gives strength to Faith. *Josh. 24. 31. Israel served the Lord all the Days of Joshua, and all the Days of the Elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the Work of the Lord, which he had done for Israel, Judges 2. 7.* Thy Affections at first are high, and thy Knowledge as low; yet, Christian, so long as Grace fetches Reasons for doing us good, even from our Folly and Sin, what should discourage? *Isai. 57. 17, 18. For the Iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the Way of his Heart; I have seen his Ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and will restore Comforts to him, and to his Mourners.* Astonishing Grace!

23 OC 62

Object. I am unworthy.

Answ.

Answ. All indeed are so. Christ deals with none but such; if thou art sensible of it, that is all that is needful to prepare thee for Christ, *Luke 4. 18.*

Object. O! But my Day of Grace is over.

Answ. Who told thee so? Satan does not know it, nor canst thou conclude so of thy self. For though thy Soul at present cleave to the Dust, it may rise again; but thou may'st be sure 'tis not so, so long as thou canst feel any one Motion of the Spirit of God upon thy Spirit, *Rev. 3. 20.* or any one Spiritual Breathing or Desire after Christ.

3. I am not humbled enough.

Answ. From *1 Chron. 29. 14.* You can only bring him of his own: Be content then to own thy Poverty, and give him the Glory of Enriching thee. *Who am I, and what is my People, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.*

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

PAge 29. line 5. read the Question, &c. thus. Quest.
How did Jesus know him, having never seen him before
as Man? Answ. As God he had oft, &c. p. 46. l. 3. r.
they do not so passionately, &c. p. 47. l. 25. r. what it will.
The rest are inconsiderable.

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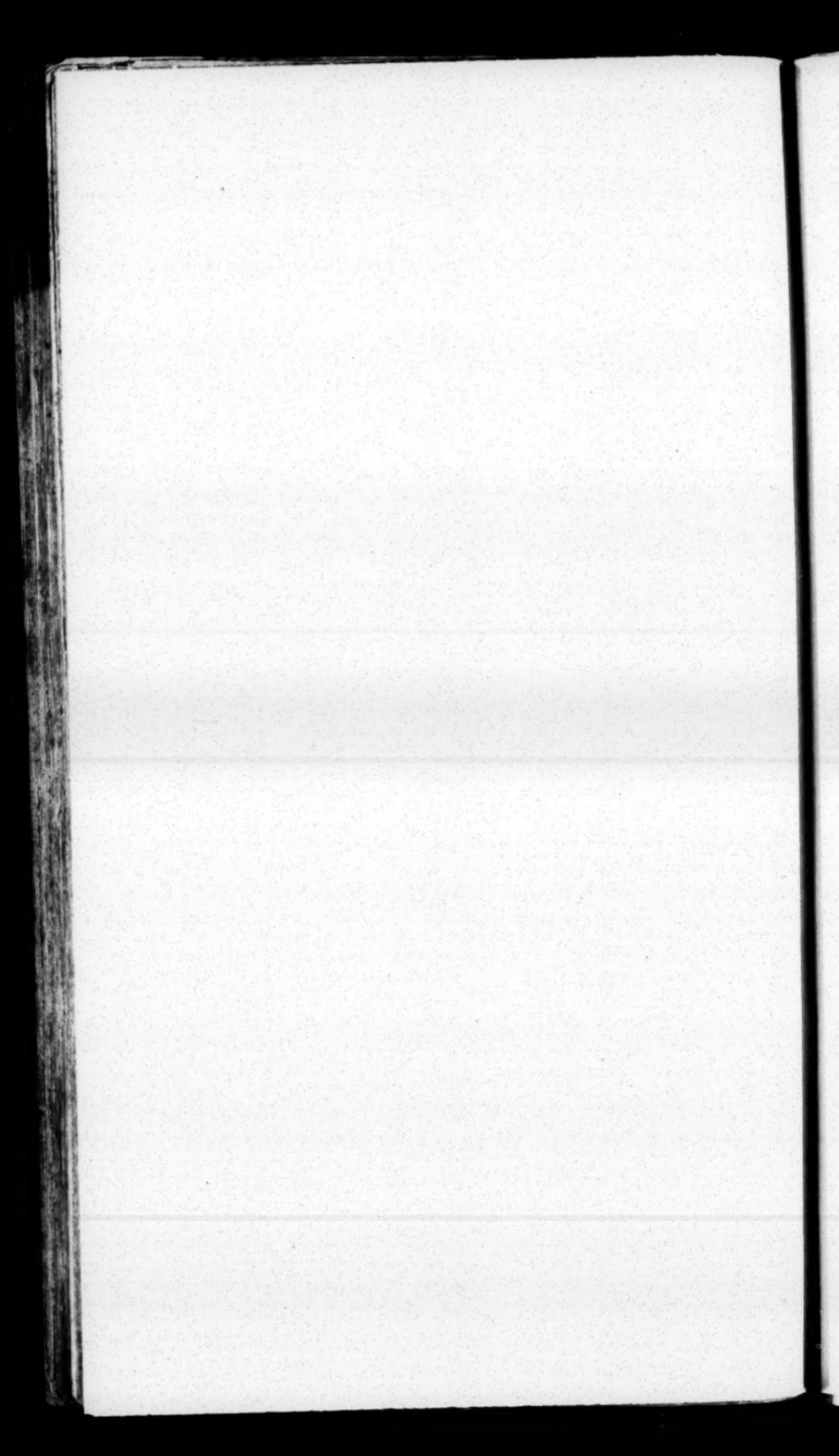
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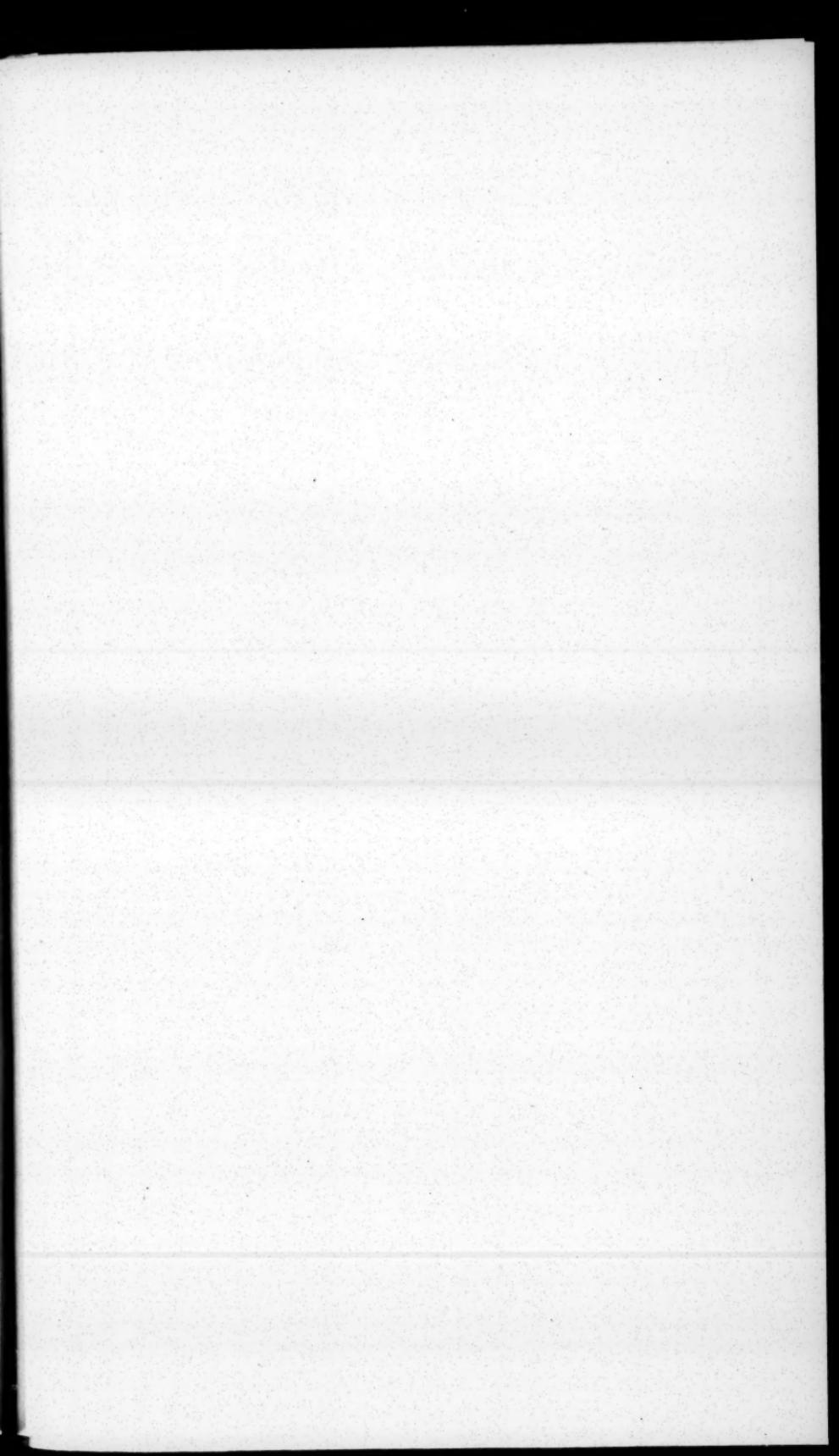
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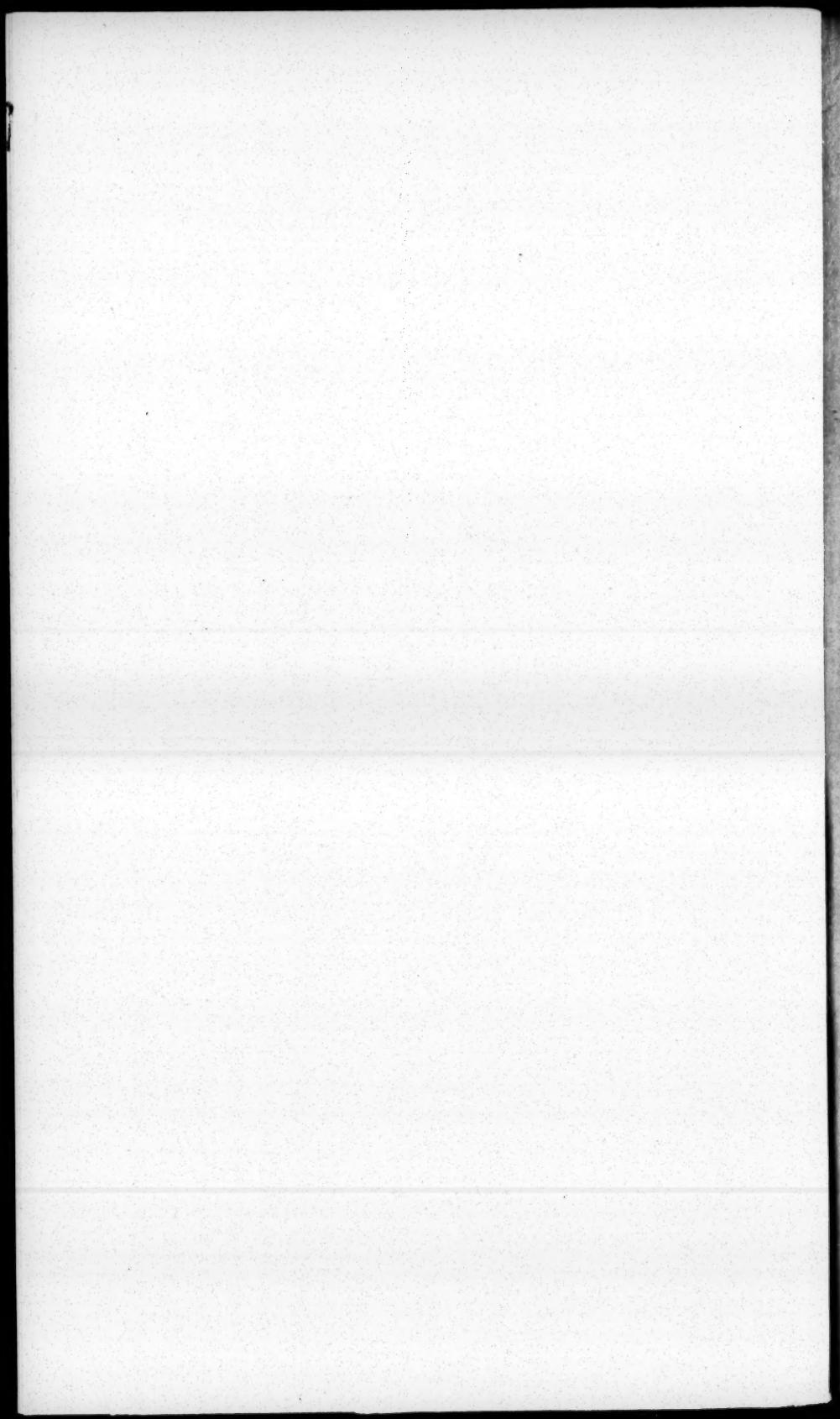
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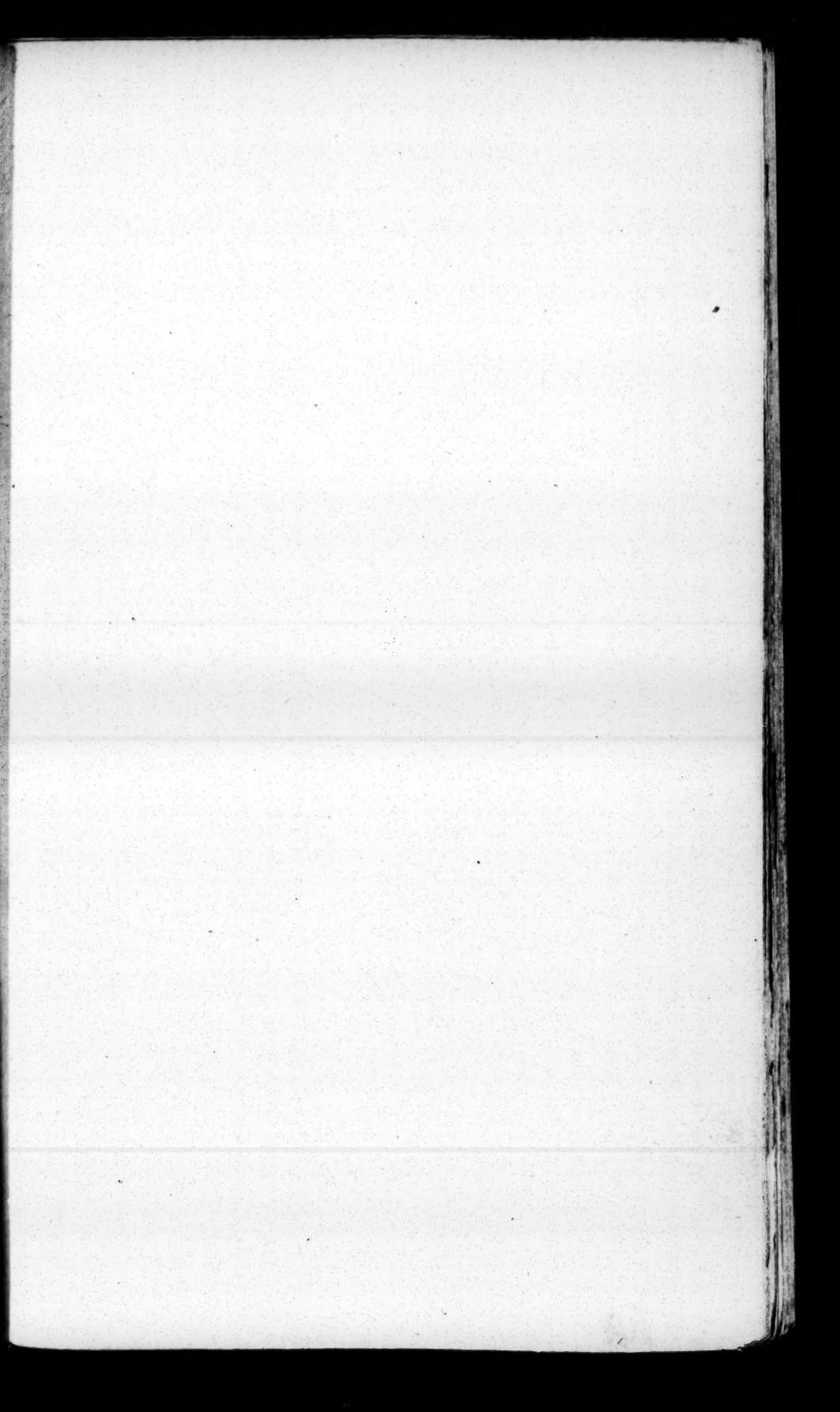
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